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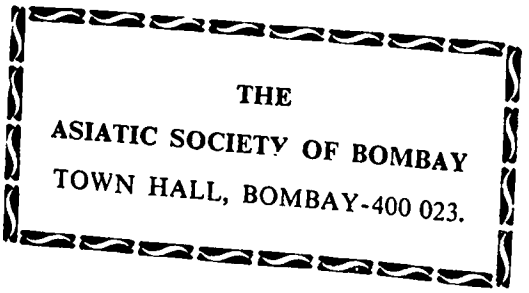

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LAS ALFORJAS;

OR, THE BRIDLE ROADS OF SPAIN.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

LAS ALFORJAS

BY

GEORGE JOHN CAYLEY

AUTHOR OF SIR [illegible] DE LACY EVANS &c &c

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Con todo eso dijo el Don Juan sera bien leer la, pues no hay libro tan malo que no tenga alguna cosa buena D^r Q^te

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LAS ALFORJAS.

LETTER XIV.

GRANADA, *March* 27.

GRANADA's hour is come, and so is also the long-expected letter of my Mabél; and before I demolish the one I must acknowledge the other. Is not this rather a *bathetic* beginning?

We had been up sketching in the Torre de la Vela, that is to say the watch-tower, or Tower of the Castle, for I believe vela means both, acquiring its metaphorical sense from the vigilous uses of a rushlight. From the Torre de la Vela, which stands out on the end of Alhambra's hill-spur, and highest of Alhambra's towers, we had been sketching the broken arches of Alkasabah.

I was cramped with lying along a deep little

window niche in the stair, about as big as half a stone coffin, into which cool and shady little hole I had stowed myself to avoid the glare and heat at the top of the tower. Lying on my left elbow to draw, and screwing my back and neck to peep out of the aperture of my exceedingly limited studio, exhausted my patience rapidly; and I scrambled out of my lair backwards—of course it was quite impossible to turn round—and went up to the top to see how H—— was coming on. He was in process of executing a very much superior work of art, but it was not half finished.

I had been distressed with a pleasant presentiment all the morning that I should get a letter to-day, and I began to be troublesome about the Post-office, but H—— said there was not a chance of the letters being in a state of delivery yet; and so I tranquillised my mind with a cigarillo as well as I could, and sat down to colour my sketch, which (owing to the glaring sunshine and my impatience, and the difficulty of painting crumbly battlements and towers—a confused mottlement of every shade of red, which an old weather-beaten brick wall will give you the best idea of), turned out a most melancholy daub.

Coming down by the Post-office (which is in the same street with our Fonda de la Amistad, and in the direct way between it and the Alhambra), we found the postmaster sorting the letters; and inquiring with a palpitating heart if there was a letter for my name, I was told it was "regular que no" (probably there was not), but that the list would be out in a few minutes. When that portentous document was wafered up it proved a blank as far as I was concerned; but knowing that, as many things in Spain are very inefficiently done with much pomp and circumstance, the names on the list bear often but a very vague resemblance to the real address on letters, I lingered pensively studying the column of "cartas estranjeras" till I fixed upon "No. 381, Don Gregorio Esqua," which I asked to look at.

I had but slight hopes, and the official seemed to hesitate in giving it me, having so suddenly changed my name. But I suppose he judged by my exclamation of delight on seeing your handwriting, that I was the rightful owner, for he allowed me to purchase it (at about twice its weight in silver) and carry it away in triumph. In transcribing the address he had begun boldly with the first Christian

name George, which he had translated Gregorio—passing over the intermediate writing as works of supererogation he had taken the Esquire—slightly modified—for the patronymic. However, I got my letter.

With respect to the letter, which I shall not at present go into raptures about, there is only one thing in it with which I am not delighted, and that of course is the first thing I select to make my remarks about. Does not your conscience tell you, faithless Ariadne, that it is your being so much taken with my "agreeable friend Sir R——," whom you met on that "pleasant" ten days' visit to S—— Park? I am more than half jealous of this young Bacchus of a Baronet, who talks to you so amiably of your absent but ever-constant Theseus. And I don't like the people at S—— Park; they are a nest of plausible humbugs. And Sir R—— was never a particular friend of mine; though I dare say he would talk very affectionately of me, and then, in his smooth, confidential, candid way, lament a few of my favourite faults; but perhaps I am misjudging him under the influence of that meanest of all human passions—jealousy, which even in its slightest tinge

gives an unpleasant yellowness even to the purest snow.

But by the way, I must tell you we have met here the loveliest creature we have seen in all Spain. We had a letter of "recomendacion" to her mother, the accomplished Marquesa P——. We had heard she was very lovely from our friends in Seville; but had learnt to have little confidence in the agreement of Spanish and English tastes. But on calling, the day after our arrival, we were both struck, to use a base but forcible metaphor, all of heaps.

She was a splendid figure, tall and stately; a beautiful fresh clear complexion, rosy cheeks, and cherry lips (which are very rarely combined with the raven tresses and flashing eyes—the common and generally sole ornaments of her countrywomen, who are also generally short and large-headed); and is besides very clever and fascinating.

We were both much struck, I said, but H—— whose heart was "without incumbrance," of course, much the most of the two. He indeed affirms that you have reason to be jealous, but that of course I indignantly deny at once and for ever. The motive

of this wicked insinuation on his part is, I believe, in confidence, that he is rather jealous of me for—but I don't think I dare tell you for you are sure to misinterpret my account, and young ladies always think a great deal more seriously of these trifles than there is any occasion for; besides in this country ladies are much more free and easy on a short acquaintance than in our arctic zone, where the heart takes a whole season of stuffy drawing-room atmosphere just to begin to thaw a little.

But I must go on now or you will, with that fertile imagination which belongs to the female mind, conjure up something indefinitely worse than the fact. Well, then, I will confess that last night (which was only our third visit, though by the way we had met another night at the Opera) I had in my button-hole a largish little bunch of violets, which had been given me by the woman showing the gardens of the Generalife. This beautiful palace, which stands a little higher up the hill than the Alhambra, from which it is only separated by a ravine, is not called from any distinguished general having lived there, but from *jinnât-al-arif*, the gardens of the cunning man—that is to say the

architect, who, after building the Alhambra, made himself, to my mind, a much pleasanter dwelling-place among terraces and hanging-gardens on the brow of the Sierra del Sol.

These fatal violets I bore in my button-hole and their history you may read, if you will condescend, in the following lines; for to make the matter worse I made verse of it on coming home, and I leave you to make the best of it.

THE VIOLETS AND THE ROSE.

The gardens of the cunning man that framed the fairy halls
Which grim Alhambra hides within her rough, red sandstone walls;
The gardens of the cunning man, 'mid terraces of flowers,
Perched higher still o'erlook the hill of battlements and towers;
Up there I got some violets, that wooed the mountain breeze,
And wore them in my button-hole till we had had our teas!
Then I put on my smartest clothes to pay an evening visit
At the Marquesa What's-her-name's! Her name 's no matter—is it?
Now this Marquesa What's-her-name a daughter fair she had, a
More lovely creature to my mind than any in Granada.
To her I gave the violets; and, as you may suppose,
Because the violets were sweet she put them to her nose!
She raised her hand up to her head, of long, black, glossy hair,
And from its folds undid the rose which Andaluzas wear!
She held the two in either hand—she seemed in doubt to be—
She kept the violets herself, and gave the rose to me.
I stuck it in my button-hole, she twined them in her hair—
There was some room for sentiment, but I have none to spare.
Indeed I could not help but think, upon my homeward way,
"Were she aware of this affair, what would my Mabel say?"

Now I know, with your wicked ingenuity, you will suggest to yourself that I have made up this circumstantial little story all out of my own head, to give you a Madame Rolande for your Oliver; but I assure you it is as true as the 'Times' newspaper, and I send you this leaf of the rose itself, wafered on the margin, to bear witness if I say not true.

But now I must, much against my will—for I know I can make nothing satisfactory of it—set seriously to work to tell you something about the Alhambra. As we went up into it the first time, I said to H—— that it reminded me of Windsor Castle. He said, "that may be very true, but it won't do to say in our book, at least as an original remark, for Ford has said the same." Indeed, Ford's description of the Alhambra, which I read for the first time, after H——'s remark, is so perfect that it leaves little to be said. Therefore, if you want to know about the Alhambra, read Ford's account.

But, as so minute a description necessarily travels over this massive pile like a telescopic field of vision, creeping bit by bit along the surface, I may as well give you a rough sketch in coarse outline, that you may catch a rude general idea more easily.

The Alhambra stands on a couple of the toes of the foot of the Sierra del Sol. That is to say, there is a long mound about 300 feet, I should think, above the level of the town. This mound, from the mountain is cut off by a rocky ravine, and towards the town is forked into the two toes above-mentioned. On the great-toe end stands the Torre de la Vela, backed by all the principal buildings of the Alhambra. On the little-toe end are the Torres Bermejas (something like the crump end of Windsor Castle, which abuts on the town), backed by straggling battlement-towers.

Between these toes there is a deep corry full of tall, thin-boled trees, which slopes up to the level of the hill, and expands into gardens and gravel-walk parades. You enter by a Janus-faced gate at the bottom, (it is of a tolerable Christian aspect on the outside, and indifferent Moorish in) and you see some dingy red towers peeping down through the trees on either side. There are three paths, but you turn to the left, slanting up the steep side of the corry. After a while you turn back at a zigzag angle of the road, and enter a Moorish archway in a tall red tower. Over the gateway is the magic hand, engraved like an Egyptian hieroglyphic in the stone.

You go up a shabbyish passage, open to the sky, and come out in a large court-yard at the top of the hill. Here you see before you the square yellow sandstone palace, begun by Charles V. The inside is unfinished, and through one of its round windows we saw a goat skip across a gap between two blocks of unfinished stonework. Behind this great solecism, and tacked on to it anyhow, without any attempt at harmony, or even straightness, are the remains of the palace of the Moorish kings of Granada, which I will not stop here to describe. They run along the precipice edge above the deep ravine valley, at whose bottom runs the Darro. It is only, seen from this valley, that the Alhambra presents any remarkable beauty on the outside.

And here sitting, after sunset, among the slender marble shafts of the breezy galleries, it is to a certain degree a realization of romance to watch the stars peeping out of the darkening sky, and the lamps peeping out of the blackening town below, and to say to one's self, "This is the Alhambra. This is the palace of dreams which Washington Irving set up in our imaginations, sculptured with more graceful forms, and painted with richer colours, and

enamelled with brighter azulejos and tarkeeshes, than even the cunning man could accomplish, or the lavish Ibnulahmar could pay for." For truly, when we compare the reality (by daylight) with the description, Washington Irving appears the cunninger man of the two.

But when the moon arises above the pass of Loja, and strikes across the Vega, pointing its towers with silver, and dancing on its streams; then, as her beams creep slowly from corner to corner, along Alhambra's walls, piercing the slender-shafted arches and lighting up the delicate tracery of the interior—then reality robed in moonshine becomes romance indeed—then the shadowy outlines of a real enchanted palace tremble upside down in the Berkah's watery mirror; and the very indifferent lions which stand (godfathers to their court) round the alabaster fountain, become imposing quadrupeds and vindicate their high renown.

You will naturally inquire, after these little flourishes, why I was disappointed with the Alhambra? First of all, I expected an imposing fortress on the outside, rude indeed, but very lofty. With our usual luck, we saw it first on the

wrong side, where it hardly can be seen at all. Then the inside, though it is very fine, is not so good as the Alcazar of Seville, though there is more of it here, and it is better situated. Altogether, let anybody going to Granada expect to be disappointed as much as he has been accustomed to be at other celebrated places, and with other celebrated beauties or celebrated men. Where was there ever a first impression which could stand against the fatal influence of previous eulogy? But you have already heard so much about Granada, from books and travellers, who are always eloquent about celebrated places, that I will not trouble you with a long letter this time.

We went to see the Cartuxa Convent this morning, where there is a large series of cleverish amateur paintings of martyrdoms, &c., by one Cotan, an ancient monk of the Carthusian order. There was one picture of a saint, supposed by himself and his pious friends to have died in the odour of sanctity; but on arriving in the other world it appears he was most unpleasantly undeceived.

The picture represents his coffin being opened in the presence of San Bruno; and the supposed

saint, with his hair on end, and his features distorted into the most agonising expression is explaining to his former fraternity some fatal mistake in their system. There are some familiar spirits from limbo attending in the capacity of sheriffs' officers—very quaint devils. The pictures are curious and spirited: some of the faces very well painted; but the artist evidently never studied anatomy or perspective, and his drawing is generally out of proportion.

I have no room for more on this sheet, and so with many blessings, I remain, &c.—We have given up the idea of going back to the ferias at Seville, and the Holy week. We should lose a long while going back; but as it is, we shall miss Cordova, which we ought to have seen. But H—— is in a hurry to move northwards. This dissolution draws him.

LETTER XV.

Jaen, April 5.

Poulticing to begin with, and washing with strong solution of lunar caustic, took the inflammation out of the Moor's shoulder, and helped the place to heal up in time to leave Granada after the ten or twelve days we had proposed to stay. The new saddles we have bought are of a better construction, and do not touch the obnoxious place. So I think we have now reason to be thankful that this rather formidable difficulty is well over for the present.

We rode out of the city by the Camino real of Jaen in mutual silence. I will not trouble even my own discreet Mabel with an explanation of a certain diplomatic difficulty which arose at breakfast. I may, however, inform your ladyship, that upon me devolved the rather ungracious task of reopening a somewhat unsatisfactory previous discussion. We had fairly cleared the suburbs, and I was meditating

how I should begin, now that we had a fair field, and nobody to interrupt our "protocolling, remonstrating, admonishing, and having the honour to be" (as Carlyle has it), even to a declaration of war, and an appeal, if necessary, to the loaded pistols we carried in our belts.

I am bound to believe that my Mabel never had anything disagreeable to say; but if she had ever been under that disagreeable necessity, she would know that the metaphorical blunderbuss of wrath is apt to hang fire in the damp weather of our cold blood; and that cowardly human nature is apt to wait till some fresh grievance, however trifling, sets the temper on hair trigger, so that a heavy discharge of long loaded indignation explodes on some seemingly very inadequate occasion.

When there is thunder in the air, the sooner it breaks the better: for better is the flash of anger and the rain-drops of contrition, than the sultry gloom and heaviness of discontent.

Making these reflections, we came in sight of the *arco de media legua*, a single arch (of an aqueduct I think) which crosses the road at about half a league from Granada. I made up my mind to begin on

reaching it. It grew nearer and nearer as the feet of our unconscious ponies pattered along the road; and as the pattering turned to a deep, hollow sound, beneath the echoes of the arch, I began.

As I said before, I will not trouble you with an explanation, which would be infallibly tedious, although I know you are dying with curiosity. But after an animated discussion of about half an hour's duration, in the course of which, by way of illustration and substantiation of our respective cases, we mutually reminded each other of all the little blemishes and drawbacks which defaced the otherwise smooth and polished mirror of our friendship, a satisfactory conclusion was effected, and peace restored.

Just as we had shaken hands over the quenched embers of discord, "Goodness me!" I cried, "my cloak is gone!" This great, heavy, folded mass, weighing, I should say, at least ten pounds, had slipped off from where I had laid it across the pommel of the saddle and my thighs, without either my feeling it go, or H——'s seeing it. Judge, therefore, whether our conversation was interesting.

We turned our ponies' heads, and saw a man

running towards us in the distance. Luckily, we had kept only at a foot's pace during our abstraction. The man came up very much out of breath, and said some workmen had found the cloak and had wanted to keep it; but he being, as he left us to infer, an honest man, had run to overtake us if possible. I returned with him, and found, sure enough, that there was an indisposition on the part of the workmen to give up their booty. The spokesman made difficulties about believing me to be the real owner, but I gave him a specification of the cloak; that it had *vueltas rojas* (red facings) and silver clasps, and moreover that it had been *ensanchado atras, por no ser antes capa redonda;* that is to say, a broad gusset or goar had been let in to make it wider. These specifications, properly seasoned with imprecational expletives, obtained me the capa, and having given my informant a peseta, I cantered back.

H—— was waiting for me at the door of a venta, where I had turned back. He had found a companion, who, on my return, saluted me with congratulations on the recovery of my cloak. This man walked along with us some way. His name

was José Vigil—a blacksmith and farrier in some village at the other side of Granada—travelling on foot as far as Jaen, where he was going to pass the Holy week with some relations. He hoped to see "*El rostro del Señor*" before his return. We did not know exactly what he meant at first, till we recollected that there is one of the numerous duplicates of the "santo rostro" (holy face) impressed in the napkin of, I believe, Sta. Veronica, in the reliquary of Jaen.

"And of what nation may you be, caballeros?"

"You shall guess. What do you think?"

"Perchance Italians."

"No; I am an Englishman, and my friend here is a Frenchman. It is a custom in our countries, which are neighbouring, as it were La Mancha and Andalusia, for the children to learn the languages of both. My father had a friend in France, and they made an agreement that for three years I should stay during half of each year with them in Paris, and he the other six months with us in London. So we became friends—much the same as brothers. And besides, my companion has a sister very lovely. I have long loved her, and this year we were to have

been married; only my health was not good, and as my companion, who is in the wine trade, had some business in Andalusia, it was agreed that we should pass this winter together in a southern climate, for up there it is very cold. Now, as the summer is coming on, we are returning northwards; and, as we came out by sea, we have bought these ponies, and are returning by land to see the country."

"You are fortunate caballeros to have the means of travelling. I have often wished I could travel myself, for it must be a pleasant thing to see the world. But I am not a rich man, like you. I have no spare money to wear in horse-shoes and wheel-tires. I have to live by making them."

"Every man is rich, my good man, who can make an honest living, and who has wisdom enough to be content. Happiness dwells quite as much at home in the work-shop of healthy labour, as on the road. And discontent often travels both on horseback and in coaches."

"That is true, señor; and thanks be to God, I am not dissatisfied with my lot. But God made the world for us all, and doubtless it is well worth seeing. They tell me our country is far behind

France and England in science. With you, men fly and travel with incredible swiftness in steamboats and railways, which we have never seen. I much wonder what a railroad is like."

"A railroad is a level tract cut through whatever uneven ground may come in the way. Sometimes it runs in a trench dug 50 or 60 feet deep in a hill: sometimes it goes across a valley on arches as high as the Alhambra stands above Granada. Sometimes it plunges through the stony heart of a mountain, and comes out after a league of darkness underground. It is laid with continuous bars of iron on which the wheels fit, so that whatever pace it goes the carriages cannot run off the road."

"But in what sort of a carriage do they travel on these iron roads?"

"There is a long string of forty or fifty carriages, each four or five times as big as a *diligencia*. It looks like a gigantic caterpillar with a hundred wheels instead of legs. It has a great iron head like a dragon, containing the engine, which pulls the whole line, and snorts great clouds of steam from its nostrils, and breathes flame, and drops great burning coals from its fiery mouth. You hear a great

panting sound like a giant out of breath afar off. You see a square spot in the distance which grows rapidly bigger and bigger in your eye as it comes puff—puff—puffing. In a moment it is here with a crashing noise; and the next moment it has past you as quick as a swallow on the wing, and is rumbling and puffing away in the distance at the other side. They can go five-and-twenty leagues in an hour, though they seldom do, for such a speed would wear the carriages out too quickly; and indeed it is almost enough to rattle them to pieces."

In this discourse we passed a small shed, too wretched to be called a venta, though they sold wine there. As it was a hot and thirsty day, I called for a real's worth of wine, and they brought us about a quart, which we drank and went on.

He said they had given us less than our money's worth. I said I had asked for a real's worth, and as long as they gave us what we wanted to drink, I was indifferent what the regular price might be.

"Oh!" said he, "if you have more money than you want, you might give it away to more deserving men than those rogues the *venteros*, who rob many

more honest men in their time than do the regular bandits of the highway. But one ought not to be too hard upon them, poor fellows; they live in constant temptation to be rogues, and their conscience gets as much trodden under-foot and worn away as the stone step at their threshold."

We passed a bridge with a very high pointed arch, which he said he had always admired as peculiarly graceful. "Yes," we replied, "but it is not as convenient as a flatter one; for you have to go up and down a very steep hill on either side."

"Beauty and convenience," he rejoined, "are seldom compatible. In that respect a bridge resembles a woman—all are dangerous, and the beautiful are less convenient and useful than the plain; but still without a bridge and a woman you cannot pass your river or your life; unless you take the one wet-shod, or pass the other uncomfortably as a bachelor."

As he talked and walked away at a great pace, the day growing hotter and hotter, he got out of breath; and as we had to get to the venta de [illegible], which was, for us, a good day's journey from Granada, and we had been going slower than

wanted for the sake of Mr. Vigil's company, we now thanked him for the same, and said we must pass on; and we hoped he would overtake us where we should stop to bait. He thanked us for our courtesy and philanthropy (cortesia y filantropia), and bid us go with God.

It is striking to us, who are accustomed to connect the use of complicated latinised words with a studious classical education, to hear them flow naturally from the mouth of a peasant; but to the Spaniard, the Latin is what the Saxon in our language is to our own peasantry—the ground-work of his language, and the pabulum from which all his commonest and most homely and household words are fashioned—whereas the Latin element with us is an after-polish, glazed on by education.

We now trotted on, and shortly reached a venta, where some clumsy carts and oxen were standing before the gateway. Entering, we put up our ponies. The host took very little notice of us—a lazy varlet, smoking the cigarillo of tranquillity in the sun. We could hardly persuade him to get us out the barley we asked for. He shortly began to eat a hunch of bread, with a slice of raw ham laid on it; and we, being

very hungry, and finding there was nothing better to be had, got some too. It rather went against my stomach, but II—— said the salting was nearly the same thing as cooking, and he had eaten a great deal of raw ham on the plains in America.

Afterwards, as we sat smoking, it occurred to us to fire off our pistols, to see if they would go off, and so charge again, so that robbers should find us in an efficiently explosive state of preparation, in case they came; though we have now almost given up all hopes of having any more adventures of that kind.

A considerable number of men were attracted to the spot by the report of our pistols, which we fired at the swallows on the rafters of the shed behind which we were sitting. They (not the swallows) were particularly struck with the revolver, and one of them said,

"Carajo, it is already evident that it would be a bad speculation to rob these men." Showing plainly that his sympathies were all on the side of the thieves, whose fatal mistake, in case they attempted such a thing, they seemed cordially to commend. I fired the six barrels in rapid succession, and on "*un ladron—dos ladrones—tres ladrones—*

ladrones—cinco ladrones—seis ladrones—y el capitan," finally discharging the large-muzzled, single-barrelled pistol of H——'s, which I also carried in my faja, as three were as much as he could conveniently carry.

We now rode on, and coming to another venta, found our friend Vigil finishing his dinner. He came along with us, limping a little, for he was getting foot-sore. Our ponies were rather tired and we got off and led them. I felt that the poor, weary, foot-sore man must feel it was unreasonable that ponies should go with empty backs; however, I could not afford to make the Moor, with his still doubtful remains of a sore shoulder, do more work than I myself required, and so I compromised the matter with my conscience, by offering to carry his cloak, which relieved him considerably without sensibly affecting the Moor.

Towards the end of our day's work, when we were all very weary, with the advice and sanction of Vigil —who had been this road before, though long ago— we took one of those short cuts which profess to slice something off across an angle of the road, but which generally make up the account fully by steepness and roughness. This one fully came up to the usual short-cut character; and after climbing up a ladder of

rocks, we found that our wretched bad road was diverging away over the hill from the right direction, and never likely to meet the *camino real* more. At right angles to our present direction appeared a large, square, white building in the valley below, and as no part of the hill-side was, or could well be more rocky than this by-path, we left it, and after a slow steeple-chase across the country, reached the Venta de Cegri.

Before the gateway a number of women and children and soldiers were scattered in picturesque groups. The women sewing, peeling potatoes, or picking lettuces for salad. The *carabineros* (who have a station here) were loitering about, talking to the women, or playing with the children. They were all gathered there to take the last out of the warmth and light of the sun, which was fast sloping to the western hills. We unsaddled our beasts. Vigil gave a favourable professional opinion of the Moor's shoulder, which he said was quite well and healed up, without likelihood of relapse. Coming out to take our share of the sunset, innumerable mules and *arrieros* kept arriving, and there was a great bustle. A man arrived with a donkey, whose huge panniers were piled with lettuces, and I bought three at a

cuarto each (three *cuartos* are about a penny), and gave them to a daughter of the house, to pick for salad.

The ventero now came up and asked us "Would we be pleased to sup? There were some partridges and rabbits in the *olla*." This was a great windfall; but we were now travelling on a great road, where the ventas are on a larger scale, and can make preparations for the chance comers of the evening, with more probability of customers turning up to pay for the stew. We had some rice fried in oil to eat with the *olla*, which, with our salad, made an excellent supper. We invited Vigil. He was off his feed, however, and could only be persuaded to eat some bread and salad, and drink a little wine.

It was now a question where to sleep. All the dwelling-rooms in the upper story of the venta were occupied by the company of *carabineros*. We therefore disposed ourselves on the stone benches which surround the chimney-corner, arranging our saddles and alforjas for pillows, and wrapping our "martial cloaks around us."

"Who sleep on couches hard are up betimes."

When the dawn looked in upon the smouldering

ashes of the hearth, we arose, shook ourselves, fed our ponies, and departed. About five miles on the road we stopped to breakfast. While the ponies were feeding I sat on the village fountain, smoking in the sun. Here Vigil came for a drink as he was passing. I asked him to go into our *posada*, which was just opposite the fountain, and have a cup of chocolate, which he accepted. Here we took leave of him for good, and he thanked us for our caballeresque conduct and benevolence towards him.

The valley along which the road ran, shortly after this began to straiten, till it came at last to so narrow a gorge between lofty precipitous rocks, that there was not room for both the stream and the way. The latter was tunnelled through the rock. The day was very hot, and the breeze blowing through the cool cavern was delicious. Emerging at the other end, the clear stream, gurgling among its rocky basins, reminded us that we might at least wash our hands and faces here for the first time to-day.

"The place seems made for the purpose!"

"No doubt, and specially for us."

"Well, let this be my washhand-stand and that yours" (pointing to the two gigantic precipices on

either side the stream). Having relieved ourselves of this little burst of the enthusiastic egotism which belongs to travellers, we washed our hands and faces at the *Puerto de Arenas*.

Know, people of all climes and races,
Who pass the "gate of sands,"
That in the stream, which laves the bases
Of these tall rocks, we washed our faces,
And likewise washed our hands.

Signed, { H. I. C.
G. I. C.

P.S. We therefore take our solemn dick,
These are the rocks of Hic and Gic.

This inscription was *not* carved on the face of the freestone in letters a foot high and three inches deep; because, though cherishing that reverential desire to perpetuate the initial letters of our names in lasting materials, which is one of the noblest features of a travelling Briton's character, we could not afford to sacrifice a day even to so memorable an occasion.

An hour or two after, a *diligence* appeared behind us, and we drew up to let it pass. They suddenly quickened their pace, and galloped past us at full speed. Perhaps they took us for thieves; at any rate it suggested the idea to us—What, if we should rob them? They would certainly give up their

money; but the question was how we should escape afterwards. Ourselves we could disguise, by changing our Andalusian dress for shooting-jackets and trowsers; but our ponies—could we arrange our cloaks and *mantas* so as to alter their appearance? Here I looked round for my cloak, which I had rolled up in my little *manta* and tied with tape to the tin loops behind the saddle. But the loops, which were rather rough, had cut the tape, and the cloak was gone. This time it did not seem worth while to go back for it, as we had already made a long day's work, and a league and a half yet remained to Jaen. Besides, the cloak was not worth much, and very heavy; and I still had my Scotch plaid to keep the rain off, which would be enough, unless we had to sleep without beds again. I was, therefore, thankful not to have lost it the day before, for I should have been wretchedly off without it last night on the stone bench. I now saw that it had an evident predisposition to get lost, having tried to escape the day before at the Arco de media legua. I have often observed when a thing is going to be lost shortly altogether, it loosens itself gradually from your possession by several previous

delinquencies. So I made up my mind to buy a better one in Madrid.

Since the Puerto de Arenas, the ravine had widened into a valley again, and the stream to a strong torrent. Jaen stands where the valley opens out, among ragged spurs of the mountains, upon the plain. On one of these stands the Moorish castle of Jaen, with ruined fortifications following the ridge in zigzags down to the city.

We crossed the river and rode up into the town. Near the gate was the *Posada del Santo Rostro.* Here we supped, and I went to sleep at once in my clothes, lying on my bed. In the middle of the night, or rather about three o'clock in the morning, I woke up severely bitten by bugs. I heard a clattering of horses below. The last thing on one's mind over night will strike one the first thing in the morning. I suppose I had some drowsy consciousness that I ought to have unsaddled the Moor before going to bed, and that the clattering might be some unscrupulous muleteer departing early to get away unobserved with my saddle. Going downstairs, I found it was only an *arriero* leading his mules to drink at a clear broad trough of running water, near

the entrance of the posada. The gate however was shut, and nobody appeared to have departed yet.

I now made an excursion through about sixty or seventy yards of stabling, edging my way between the tails of two long rows of mules, standing as close together as they could be packed. The Moor was lying like a dead horse, with his head down and his legs stretched out; but he had no saddle on. This looked bad, and I went to see if the *Mozo de la Cuadra* was anywhere to be found. In the space near the entrance and fireplace, the floor was covered with muleteers lying on the ground, with a manta beneath and a capa to cover them.

I could find no mozo moving about, nor did I remember his face so as to wake up the right man among the sleepers. At last, the man who had been watering his mules came to lie down. I asked him what the mozo's name was, and on his authority went about crying—"Alfonzóóóóóô!" At length, out of a sort of dust-hole closet near the corn-bin, came a man, rubbing his eyes. I told him my grievance, and we went together and inspected all the premises with no success. At last he suggested that it might be in my room. I said I thought not, for I had left

it on, and gone to sleep without taking it to a place of safety. However, when we came upstairs with a lamp, there it was in the ante-room of our chamber, where H——, seeing I had gone to sleep, had doubtless caused it to be taken. I was rather ashamed of the trouble I had caused, and gave the mozo a cigar, by way of a sop. He went away quite satisfied, nor the least vexed at his rest being so needlessly broken.

As I was now thoroughly awake, and had no desire to go to sleep again, I lit the lamp, and got my inkstand and blotting-book out of the alforjas. My lamp has just burned out for want of oil, and I finish this by daylight, which has luckily supervened. Don't be alarmed at the idea of my writing by night. I had slept from about eight to three in the morning, which is seven hours. It is now time to wake H—— up, and go and feed the ponies.

There, I have given them a *medio celemin* a-piece, and they are munching away heartily. H—— is dressing, and grumbles considerably about being bitten. It appears they attacked him during the early part of the night, so that he could not get to sleep; and that when they took pity on him, they

came over to me and waked me up. However, you are obliged to them and the saddle, and the arriero watering his mules, for this letter. I shall finish now, and put it in the post here; for we are going across the country by by-roads to Cuenca, and I suppose the more out-of-the-way the place, the more chance of letters posted there being lost. Not that this one being lost would be much importance, but I am tired of it now with writing; and when you get it with a fresh mind, it may have freshened up too on its passage, and turn out a readable letter after all.

You can't think how much more cheerfully I travel long distances now that our faces are turned homewards, and every day's journey brings me nearer to my Mabel.

The moza is bringing our two *jicaras* of chocolate, so I must clear the table. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

La Mancha, *April* 7.

Leaving Jaen by the great Madrid road, we followed the same for about a league and then turned off to the right, taking a by-path for Torre Quebradilla.

In sight of this pretty little village we halted by the border of a barley field; H—— to sketch the place, and I, as my forte does not lie in landscape, to draw the Cid and his master. They formed a picturesque group. H—— sitting cross-legged on the grassy bank, and the Cid, his bridle looped round the artist's knee, nibbling the herbage.

The impatient little jerks of the rein, when the latter strained towards some tempting tuft, just beyond his reach, was shortly found so detrimental to the artistic process, that the Cid was turned adrift; and I followed this example with the equally troublesome Moor.

Our steeds, being now free to adopt a diet of their own choosing, began to show a decided preference for the tender green barley, into which they unceremoniously waded knee deep. We were soon interrupted in finishing our sketches by an indignant protest from the owner of the barley-field, who came up in breathless wrath, *carajoing* at both the animals and us. We begged him to *disimular* (excuse) our indiscretion, caught our marauders and entered the village.

At the *posada*, where we stopped to breakfast, the unsophisticated inhabitants gathered to look at the unaccustomed sight of foreigners. Our arms, and especially the revolver, astonished and delighted them. "They had heard England was the most wonderful country in the world. In Biscay, indeed, were made arms—terrible weapons; but nothing so astute as this." They were almos equally astonished at our drawings: and were altogether charmingly fresh and innocent after the callous indifferent folks of the main road.

On our way down the other side of the rounded hill, after leaving Torre Quebradilla, a bold isolated crag pierced the soil on our right. It was a mere

trifle, not more than forty or fifty yards high, but pretty; with much breadth of massive shade, and gracefully plumed with shrubs.

"How this would draw pic-nics in a county where rocks are not plentiful! say Lincolnshire."

"Yes—truly a pic-nic is a choice thought in this hungry land."

Here, in the grassy hollow, would be spread
The snowy cloth—dimpled with various viands.
Ah! cleanly damask of our native land!
Ah! pleasant memory of pigeon pie
Short crusted—savoury jellied—floury yolked!
Ah! fair white-bosomed fowl with tawny tongue
Well married! lobster salad crisp and cool,
With polished silver from clean crockery
Forked up—washed down with drinks that make me now
Thirsty to think of.
Yes, with ginger pop
These crags should echo.

Ah! rare golden gleam
Of sack in silver goblets gilt within!—
Bright evanescent raptures of champagne—
Brisk bottled stout in pewters creamy crowned!
And here should sit, 'neath gay fringed parasols,
Fair creatures with blue eyes and golden curls
(Not drenched with scents as foreign ladies are),
Smelling of kid gloves and Eau de Cologne.
Shiny-black-belted youths, in braided caps
And braided blue frock coats, should wait on them,
Making substantial laughter and slight jests—
Heroes undress from the next garrison,

With much Macassared ringlets auburn hued,
And corkscrew twirled moustache of brighter red—
Arch conquerors of hearts in country towns.
And the repast now ended—Cornet Phibbs
Would bear the campstool to yon mossy mound—
Would spread the sketch-book and the tumbler fill
(For Cornet Phibbs is quite the ladies' man);
While sweet Miss Flora Fubbs, with much ado,
Seating herself in graceful attitude,
And choosing paint-brushes and mixing paints,
Declares she always makes a wretched daub
When people stand and watch her as she draws.
But Cornet Phibbs replies—"It is too bad!
'Pon honour, 'tis too bad. Gweat artists like
To make a mystewy and monopoly,
Hiding the secwets of their art. Now I
Thought I should get a winkle watching you.
You didn't know I dwew!—I learnt at school."
"Perhaps you only learnt to draw your sword."
"Why, that I can, of course—and also corks—
And covers—haw!—haw!—haw! But what I mean,
Fortification—haw!—in Indian ink,
That sort of thing—and though I dwaw it mild—
Yet that—haw!—haw!—that may be called my *forte*."
"Oh fie! for shame! where do you think you 'll go
For making such a mass of foolish puns?"
"Why to the Punjaub I should think—haw!—haw!
That sort of job you know would suit me best."

I am almost ashamed to have troubled you with this pic-nic impromptu, over which we laughed at the time as we rode along, while the scene was vividly before our imaginations; but now I have forgotten half of it, and you will perhaps justly

say that what remains is not much worth remembering; but it will serve to give you an idea of how we amuse ourselves in the saddle, where we pass long hours. Besides amusing us, it is useful to rattle off one's brilliant ideas as they come up, for it fixes them a little in the memory; and a good deal of the rant I deliver with much gesticulation over the flowing mane of the Moor, will reappear in my share of the voluminous volumes, which you know is to be a richly embroidered caricature of the ordinary florid Gothic, the tourist's favourite style of architecture in bookbuilding; as, indeed, is natural enough, for is not the British tourist usually a florid Goth?

To-day's history, though there is next to nothing in it, will give you a good sample of the way our book will be constructed, and therefore I shall dilate upon it without conscientious scruples about being tedious. We knew we must soon pass Guadalquivir, which would here meet us for the first time since leaving Seville, and probably for the last time in our lives. We expected his appearance with impatience, as it were the face of an old friend.

At length we heard the rushing of waters beyond the edge of a low cliff or very high bank, and we figured to ourselves a clear trout stream rushing among rocks.

"Hail infant prince of Andalusian rivers, which (since we left thy royal court on Seville's strand deep-ranged with fairy palaces) hast younger grown, while we wax stale upon our toilsome way. We heard the nursery-babblings of thy youth, and deemed that here, not far remote from thy mountain cradle, we might behold thee clear and unpolluted yet with that rich wealth of mud which, lower down, thou takest as tribute from thine alluvial dominions. We find thee turbid in thy youth as in thine after age. Rolling foul ripples of a livid red as 't were pink madder mixed with Vandyk brown!

"Flow on, unworthy heir of noble destinies! For thou shalt pass by glorious Cordova — eloquent Cordova. The gem of the south — the flower of science and of valour. The birth-place of Lucan and the Senecas. The city of the great Captain. Thou shalt wash the Moorish piers of *Sevilla la Maravilla*; and shalt mix thy mud at last with the pure blue Mediterranean!"

I shouldn't wonder if my Mab was a little tired of rhapsodies. Come now, we will hatch a little adventure expressly for your amusement.

Riding down the curious sloping bridge, whose graduated arches connect the high bank of the river with the low one, we saw about half a mile ahead a knot of people moving on the road.

"It is about time for another batch of robbers," I said; "and if these be thieves, how many are we a match for?"

"We may reckon ourselves a match for four Spaniards, or two Englishmen," replied H——, "and no more; let us be moderate."

"I think that *is* rather too moderate—considering our far more than ordinary supply of arms, our valour, and extreme readiness to fight. Life is a lottery, and so is literature, and it's great odds we shouldn't both of us be killed: and if one of us really was killed, it would make the fortune of the Voluminous volumes, half of which would have to be posthumous. It would give such reality to the incident, to have read in the newspapers about the banditti killing one of the authors named in the title page."

"Good heavens, how shocking! what do you think your Mabel would say if she heard you talk in that careless way about an event which——"

"She would say I was an unfeeling wretch. But talking about it doesn't make me any more likely to be killed; and one can't pick this rose adventure without our fingers coming near that thorn danger. Of course it would be very shocking and all that. But I have no sort of expectation of its happening. Moreover, I think you underrate what we could do with all these pistols. We are more than a match for two average Englishmen. For instance, we overtake these three men on their lazy mules—we shall soon reach them. Ha! by their dress they are no Spaniards! They are two travelling Englishmen with a Spanish servant. Look!—by Jove they have both of them silver spectacles astride of their pug noses. They are clergymen just presented with livings, seeing a little of the world through glasses before they settle. Have at them! These men shall never show fight—I warrant you they will have a bag of dollars a-piece to give to robbers, as nervous old ladies sometimes carry sugar plums,

to keep children quiet. Have at them, say I—it is a pity they should carry their money-bags for nothing, and it is as well it shouldn't go out of the family—nation—I mean. Of course you say it is ridiculous—so is the beginning of every adventure. But having stepped upon that rolling rail imprudence, you slip over head and ears into this river Necessity, and then Prudence shall bid you swim as best you can, to get yourself out. It is the first step only! Come, we want robbers in this part of our work, and it is both cheaper and more convenient to rob than to be robbed!"

Hereupon we ride up—pull out our pistols and cry "*Abajo!*" "*Boca a tierra!*" with voices of thunder. The Spanish guide, who is on a good horse, gallops back to Jaen as hard as he can; and I fire a shot from my revolver, so as to go within about fifteen yards of him, which causes him to gallop the harder. Our victims, seeing there is no escape with their lazy mules, and having read what is the correct thing to do, go down on their knees with their faces to the road, entreating us in bad but courteous Spanish to use them well, and they will give us all we require.

"*Callarse perros,*" we reply. "*Boca a tierra.*" Then we hold a little colloquy in our best Spanish, advising with one another whether it be expedient to "*acabar a estos becerros*" (make an end of these calves); at which they begin to tremble violently. Having taken a heavy bag of silver from each of their alforjas, we leave them, with an injunction to stand where they are till we are out of sight, on pain of instant death if we should be obliged to return to them.

Leaving them standing in the road, we cut across the open fields of the long slope which rises from the river up to Baeza. About half a mile to the left we descend into the hollow and disappear. It is now time to reflect a little what to do. We stop at a small pool of puddly water — change our muleteer's costume for shooting jackets and trowsers —get out a bluntish old razor, long unused, and a bit of soap which we moisten in the puddle; and shave as well as we can, mowing and hacking away like backwoodsmen in the bush. We now ride round beneath the northern brow of Baeza's hill, and enter the city by the gate on the Uveda side. We arrive at the posada. On returning from the

stables we meet our friends of the late encounter, whom we at once address in English, fraternize, and order our suppers together.

In talking to the posadero we pitch our Spanish several pegs even below theirs, and make a desperately British effort to explain the nature of a beefsteak. We detect them privately chuckling together over these John-e-Bull-itions of resolute nationality, having themselves Españolized, as they think, effectually.

We find, though we had no recollections of their outward men, that they were at Cambridge with us, and that their names are no other than the Rev. Messrs. Blink and Mole, celebrated in our year for their rivalrous animosity in lecture-room. Mole's uncle, a great cheese-chandler in Cheapside, has lately died, leaving him forty thousand pounds, "because he had done credit to the family by being the senior optimus of his year." This the good man had luckily confused with senior wrangler. Mole, having already taken orders, has bought the reversion of a rich living; and Blink, generously forgiven now in this flood of prosperity, is to be his curate, when the octogenarian present incumbent quits

Moudewarp Rectory for a narrower tenement beneath a flagstone of the chancel in Moudewarp church.

They are both in a great state of excitement and high spirits, and talk mysteriously of their adventures. After supper, and a copa or two of aguardiente, we extract from them an account of the grand feature of the day; and are treated to a "real collision with fierce bandits, bearded to the eyes, and armed to the teeth," which will appear, expanded more at large, in the pages of that graphic work

LOS ANTOJOS;

OR,

SPECTACLES IN SPAIN.

BY THE

REV. THEOPHILVS BLINK, M.A.;

followed, by way of contrast, with a supper scene at the posada with two real John Bulls, hungering for beefsteaks, and thirsting for bottled porter.

Think of Blink's feelings when "Las Alforjas" comes round in his circulating library, and he reads it, "just to see what those roaring blades can have seen or done to write a book about."

Here we passed the party, whose appearance in the distance had suggested this episode; and they turned out to be neither bandits nor pug-nosed parsons, but cutlers of Albacete returning from Jaen, where they had been selling their wares. I bought a poignard of them for a dollar and a half. The *puñales* of Albacete are famous: long, narrow-pointed, murderous weapons, not opening like a Sevillian *navaja*, but sheathed as a dagger.

When we had passed them, we fell to discoursing upon imagination, and the degree to which fiction may be brought to resemble fact. As an instance of wonderful power in this way, we lit upon Don Quixote's meeting with the barber on his ass. First he sees something shining bright, like gold, in the distance, on the top of a horseman's head. The reader wonders what strange and incredible thing is to appear. It turns out to be a barber, returning on his ass from a neighbouring village, where there was no resident member of his profession, and he had put his basin over his hat, which was a new one, because it was raining slightly.

The reader being satisfied with this circumstantial solution of the apparent improbability, and knowing

Don Quixote's peculiar insanity, and his previous difficulties with the pasteboard substitute, is quite prepared for the delusion of Mambruno's helmet. The scene being thus in action, the continuation is easy enough. The barber runs away; Don Quixote rejoices over the helmet; and Sancho, with his practical eye to solid advantages, exchanges his ass's shabby harness for that of the barber.

The difficulty and the triumph of invention was to get the copper shaving-dish reasonably on the barber's head; or rather to hit upon the incident of a barber so peculiarly helmed. This appears to me to be so difficult a thing to have imagined, that I should prefer the supposition that Cervantes had actually seen some barber with his basin on his head to keep his new hat from the rain; and, being struck with some vague similitude of a helmet, his imagination fell to shaping some circumstances in which such an incident could be employed. As it must have been an imaginative lunatic, full of strange ideas of knight-errantry, who could be fairly carried away by a belief in its being really a helmet, it is possible that hence may have arisen the very idea of a Don Quixote. Indeed, this apparently very random

theory is strengthened by the fact that on Don Quixote's first appearance, his very earliest difficulty is with the imperfect *célada*, which was just defective in that part (the *morion*, I think) which the shaving-dish was destined to supply. In imaginative minds there is no telling how small a matter may be the nucleus round which materials gather, that again suggest other and larger matters, so that the original idea often becomes merely an episode in the complete result.

Here is one of our theoretical disquisitions on literature, which I give you in *résumé*, instead of dialogue, because, being shorter, it will be less trouble to you to read, and me to write.

I don't know whether we shall venture to avail ourselves of this sort of material to fill out our volumes; for, however such delicate critics as your ladyship may appreciate these professional speculations on the intricacies of the art, just consider the disgust of some fast young man of fair abilities, who would back himself to make a book against any man, and who usually reads French novels and the racing calendar, but has kindly made an exception in my favour, because he and his friend Beauchamp

Spriggs are to take a turn in Andalusia next spring, and he wants to be "up to the last things, and do it in the craftiest manner."

As we were ascending the long hill which rises from the river up to the town, the sun was sinking over Jaen, and the red sunset slanting along the wide valley lit up the broad craggy shoulders of the mountain range facing Baeza to the south. Along the darkening plain, a few winding reaches still caught the golden sky; and so we saw the last of Guadalquivir.

Baeza, not very remarkable as you approach, is a curious place inside. There is a vast circular *plaza* surrounded by columns and arches. Lighted up at night by lamps in the windows, with groups sauntering about in the broad dark space, it struck us as a singular town, unlike anything we had yet seen. We found the *Posada de los jardines*, where we supped on asparagus-omelette and salad. The asparagus-omelette is made by frying the ends of the shoots in oil, and, when they are done enough, the broken eggs are poured into the frying-pan, and the whole mess stirred up. The pan is not set on again, being hot enough to cook the eggs without

further application to the fire. A good omelette is founded in the same manner on crisp fried potatoes.

Up at five next morning, and set off in a mizzling rain. Not having made sufficiently particular inquiries we, of course, went wrong, and as we were busy talking we got within a mile of Uveda before we found it out. An old man and his son arrived as we stood pondering on our difficulty. He answered our questions about Arquillos civilly enough; but when we began to consider whether we could not rectify our error now, by going to Vilche and get into our route further on than Arquillos, the old man lost his patience.

"Vilche, my good sirs, is by no means in the way to Arquillos."

"That is indifferent to us: we desire to go in a north-east direction, and shall be obliged if you will tell us whether this by-path here, leaving the road, will take us in that line?" This was too metaphysical an abstraction for him, and he turned to his son.

"Come along, my son; since it is evident that these caballeros neither know their way, nor where they wish to go,—let us continue our day's work!'

So we took the by-path, which proved very circuitous and stony, winding among vineyards and olive groves along the brow of a hill, till it descended to El Marmol* in the valley. This, so far from being a city of marble palaces, as its name would suggest, was a miserable little village which had no *posada*. We managed, however, to purchase some barley at a private house, and stood in the porch while our beasts picked a little of the corn out of the flat matting basket. They were neither of them hungry, and the Moor was pertinaciously determined to put his foot in it instead of his nose, and would snuff and nibble and twitch at the rim of the basket: and, if by any accident he did get a mouthful of corn, he was sure to lift up his head out of the extempore manger and scatter most of it in the street. As it was raining, and we were stopping merely for their advantage, you may be sure we gave our refractory beasts several severe reprimands; but to no purpose; we could not persuade them to be hungry, nor inform them that they would not have another chance till evening.

* Written El Marnal in the map, but called El Marmol by the people.

Here they told us that Vilche was out of our way, and that Las Navas was the shortest cut to San Esteban, where we proposed to sleep. On our way along this weary cross-country road we overtook a farmer, who seemed suspicious of us at first; but was reassured of our respectability on hearing we were Englishmen. He said he wondered we were not afraid to travel alone in a strange country. We asked him what there was to be afraid of, telling him we had ten pistol barrels between us. We had not made this boast long, when H—— discovered that he had lost one of his long pistols out of his faja.

This was on the bank of the brick-dusty Guadalihmar (*arabicè* red river), near a wooden cross set up to the memory of a murdered man. We turned back as far as the bridge over the river, which we had crossed about a mile before, and met some muleteers. We suspected by their manner that they had found it, though they stoutly denied it.

I was for searching them by main force; but H—— thought it better to bribe them; so he offered half an ounce of gold to any well-disposed person who would bring it to us at San Esteban, if it was found by anybody they met during the day.

It has not yet appeared, and I fear there is little chance. I wish we had searched the men, which would have been easily done.

On to Las Navas—small venta; a little further two roads diverge at a well: here our ponies drank, and we went to the right, the smaller track of the two. It led along a broad valley. A sharp shower overtook us and we begged for shelter at a small *cortijo* or farm-house.

When the *chaparron* had blown over, a Valencian lad, from the venta San Esteban, who had come on a message from the ventero to his uncle (the farmer with whom we had taken refuge), undertook to accompany us to our destination. This was lucky, as the night came on very dark, and the way lay across a stony, sloppy wilderness, through which it would have been extremely difficult to see any way at all, without guidance, by that light or rather darkness.

We reached the venta, not before we were very tired; and, as we had dined at Las Navas, and were not hungry for supper, we made some *aguardiente* egg-flip in a huge glass mug with a handle, as big as a pewter. The flip was not good for want of sugar;

there was none in the house. There were no beds either, and we had to sleep on two wretched narrow mattresses, on broad bolsters (bags stuffed with straw and fleas), in the immediate vicinity of the horses. Indeed they were only walled off by a low partition; and we could hear the Cid and Moor munching their barley over our heads till we fell asleep.

We had requested to sleep in the straw-loft, but our host absolutely refused saying that "St. John the Baptist himself should not go up into his *pajar*."

Next morning we were up betimes, and made our first stage to Montizon. The country hereabouts changes from broad cultivated valleys to the rolling hills of the *dehesa*. Riding over one of these, we heard numerous voices in the brushwood—a partridge got up—bang—no effect—bang—this time the bird fell. We stopped a little while to see the sport, and shortly about twenty men armed with muskets came out upon the road. We were a little afraid lest they might think it came well into their day's work to do a stroke of business in the way of traveller-shooting. However, thinking it better not to seem to entertain the possibility, we rode up to the party, and in a patronising manner asked to see

the contents of the bag, as we might prove purchasers. There was only one rabbit besides the partridge we had just seen slain, but that was enough for our dinner, so we bought them, and strung them on the iron rings of our respective halters.

On reaching Venta Quemada, or Venta Nueva, (for there was some ambiguity in the statement of the host, who probably lied as remotely as any form of expression could carry him from the truth), we had our rabbit and partridge hacked up and fried in oil, and it was very good and tender, not having had time to cool.

There was a man smoking a pipe, a very rare thing in these parts, where the paper cigar is almost universal. This pipe was made seven years ago. He had cut the bowl out of a soft black stone, and the stem was a twig from the *dehesa*, with the pith pushed out. This pipe at once struck my fancy. It had a quaint barbarian cut about it, and looked something like one of the Red Indians' calumets on a small scale.

H—— was smoking a filthy white halfpenny clay, bought at Gibraltar. I saw, by the man's looking at it, that he thought H——'s the best of the two,

and I said I had one of that sort which I would swap with him. He jumped at the idea, and I got mine out of the alforjas, where it was carefully stowed as a *corps de réserve*, in case I broke my own faithful black clay, which has served a year or more.

The man seeing what a number of old gloves stiffened with cards it came out of, conceived my halfpenny pipe must be an object of great value, and evidently thought he had taken advantage of my simplicity. But after all perhaps he did take me in. We value what is rare to us. To him the civilised pipe was a rarity, to me the barbarian; and if civilisation be the better state of the two, of course he had the best of it. But then his pipe was unique—made by hand, with much labour; the other, turned out of a mould which had fashioned fifty-thousand twin brethren.

Riding on among the winding hills, a theory was started to show why mountain scenery was more popular than dead levels. We agreed that, more than superior beauty, rapid change and the uncertainty of what you are coming to, make the reputation of mountains. Looking over a long plain, and seeing all the towns and towers you can reach in a day

or two, is a limited species of foreknowledge, which is too much for humanity. If we had the gift of prophecy, life would be a dead level. That beautiful and accomplished young lady, Miss Amusement, derives her origin from old Grandfather Doubt and old Grandmother Curiosity.

Amusement is the business of foolish men—to them everything is uncertainty, and the smallest trifles exciting. The wise man, who sees much further before his nose, is not so easily amused: he requires to be engaged in deeper and more perplexing matters, in order to obtain that anxiety which is necessary to the enjoyment of life.

But though the fool is more easily amused, he is also more easily impatient. To see your way before you, shortens your way. Uncertainty gives excitement—foreknowledge patience.

Descending from the hills into a broad green vega, we crossed a rapid, red, muddy stream, which divides Andalusia from La Mancha. Crossing it we saw a great castle not far off to the left. A little further on, turning round for another view of it, it was gone, and there was no apparent reason in the lying of the land, and I immediately declared it was an enchanted

castle, and said I would make a legend for it, but I don't feel in the humour now, so you must wait for it in the "Voluminous." Round about this vega, there seem a good many castles.

A little after sunset we rode into La Torre, a straggling village, which however had a decent posada. Here we found a knife-grinder, who put an edge on our daggers, which are rather blunted with cutting Cavendish for our pipes. The host, seeing our pistols, was astonished, and as he of course told everybody, we soon had a levée of all the magnates of the place. They agreed my revolver was "*una cosa muy linda y digna de verse,*" (a thing very beautiful and worthy to be seen,) and the alcalde, seeing the name of Palmerston on our passports, fell into the usual raptures over that great and terrible signature. There is no European reputation like his. He is the ever-wakeful Jupiter of diplomacy, ready to hurl a neat and effective packet of thunder, tied up with lightning-coloured tape, from his Olympus in Downing-street, on any body rash enough to ill-use a British subject, and he deserves and possesses the filial reverence of all young gentlemen on their travels, for his paternal care and affection; and so you may tell

Lady Palmerston, placing me at her feet, on the next of her delightful Saturday-evenings.

To return to the village of La Torre. The authorities, seeing we had such magnificent passports, asked if we belonged to the Embassy at Madrid? This was a severe blow to our muleteer disguise.

But I must finish this long letter, which has been written by snatches, sometimes at night, and sometimes in the middle of the day, when we stop to bait. You know, my dearest child, I should not write so profusely, if it were only out of love to you, however great that love may be. But having, out of love to you, to write a good deal, I try to whip up while it is fresh, all that strikes me on my way, and I expect upon these letters (striking out much that is good for nothing, and inventing a good deal afterwards), to found my portion of the book we are going to manufacture.

Of course in the hurry and the weariness of travelling, when one has not time to be select, I write down a great many things unworthy of the dignity even of that most base sample of literature, a Tourist's Journal; but at the same time it is almost impossible to say what may strike one as valuable

afterwards—at least so I have found it, looking over old letters written from abroad. Some of them, which I remembered thinking the most flat and ordinary stuff, amused me afterwards, from reproducing vividly things which though common and uninteresting at the time, brightened up when contrasted with the hazy distance of memory.

I dare say, although of course you would not confess it, you would be better pleased with a periodical repetition of rhodomontade about my heart, and how it pines, &c. away from the sunshine of my Mabel's eyes, instead of these long-winded descriptions. But, in confidence, my heart has been very cheerful since I turned the Moor's head towards Albion's happy isle. I live in the midst of such bright hopes and anticipations of the day, no longer very distant, when I shall see you again, that I dare say I shall be cruelly disappointed when I see my real Mabel, and find how much I have enhanced the perfections, and forgotten the blemishes of her character, in that idol-semblance shrined by memory, which I carry about to console the pangs of absence. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

VILLARTA, *April* 12.

ON leaving La Torre our road lay through Cozar, and then across a plain covered with young wheat. Towards noon we reached Cubillas, a very ruinous village. Entering it, we asked our way to the posada, and as we went on we heard one of the persons we had asked, say to the other, "There go two Andaluzes." This is the first time we have been taken for Spaniards after opening our mouths. Here we baited, and ordered a potato-omelette. In cooking it, the old *posadera*, not having sufficient nerve to toss the omelette (a dexterous manœuvre by which it performs a somersault in the air and lights in the frying-pan the other way up), appealed to her daughter.

This young lady, who was one of the most beautiful women we have seen in the Peninsula, set down the tambour-frame, on which she was embroidering

some fine linen, rose with that majestic and queenly air which the supremacy of loveliness seldom fails to give a woman of whatever rank, and tossed it quite in a manner to give one an appetite. She had a fine figure, rather tall; delicately regular features, large dark-fringed eyes, and a splendid mass of hair looped up in glossy folds behind her neck.

Both H—— and myself fell in love at first sight. But business before pleasure; and so we ate our luncheon first. I then seated myself beside her in the chimney-corner.

By way of opening the conversation with an interesting topic, I asked her when she was to be married? She, instead of, as I supposed she would, entirely denying all thought or intention of such an undertaking, simply answered, "in August."

"And so you are embroidering lilies and roses on the wedding sheets?" I continued.

"On the pillow," said she.

"How long was the courtship?" said I.

"Two years," said she.

"And how old is the *novio?*" (sweetheart) said I.

"Twenty-two," said she.

"And you?" said I.

"Nineteen," said she.

"It sounds like a discreet preparation for happiness; and I hope your pillow may be strewed with real roses and lilies," said I.

"I thank your worship," said she; and so we mounted and rode away.

After crossing a league or two more of the plain, we were within about the same distance of a range of hills, when the road disappeared in the midst of a wheat-field. Here it was very heavy riding, and to make it worse, rain came on. Good fortune at last brought us to another road, by which we got to El-Christo de la Valle, whose minaret-like towers and steeples rise in a narrow cleft through the range of hills.

Riding into the town with my long brown Scotch plaid hanging down to the ground almost on either side, with the front corners knotted over the Moor's mane, so that I dare say he looked very like a hobby-horse at Astley's, the children of the place, who probably had never seen so strange a figure, shouted and laughed with such enthusiasm, that we were glad to take shelter in a posada.

When we had dried ourselves at a blazing fire,

and eaten a salad, we rode over three more weary leagues of plain to Manzanares. Our beasts got very tired, and so did I; for the dangling plaid, heavy with rain, dragged my shoulders. We must have ridden rather more than thirty miles to-day. I went to sleep by the kitchen fire, and was waked by H—— to eat very tough chicken for supper.

Next day, Good Friday, we gave our ponies a half-holiday, and at three o'clock were just starting for the venta Quesada, intending to sleep there. You are, or should be aware, that this is *the* venta of Don Quixote. Here he arrived on the evening of his first sally, was knighted, and performed the vigil, watching his armour over the well-trough.

Our host of the *posada del Carillo*, who was standing at the folding-gates of his court-yard to see us off, happened to ask where we intended to sleep, and we told him.

"That is a bad place to sleep, Señores. The venta is a miserable hut, and the people of the house are *malo paño* (bad cloth). There are no beds there."

"We had heard it was a large venta, *Señor huesped;* is it not a very ancient venta?"

"Oh, no, Señores; it is only a wretched hovel to supply a station of *carabineros* with *aguardiente*. There was once a great and commodious venta there, but that was burnt down in the war time."

"Was that an old building?"

"Oh, yes! a *cosa de siempre* (thing of always). There is nothing left of it but the well and a great stone trough."

As we had no intention of passing the night watching a row of pistols and daggers on the edge of the well-trough, this information altered our plans. We decided now to turn towards Argamasilla del Alba, where the first part of Don Quixote was written in prison. The church tower of this celebrated place soon appeared, but we found the road much longer than it seemed; for distances on the dead levels of La Mancha, with a clear atmosphere, are very deceptive.

It was half-an-hour after sunset as we entered Argamasilla. While our hostess of the Posada de la Mina was preparing our supper, we inquired if she had ever heard of Miguel Cervantes, who had lived in the *carcel?*

"No, Señores. I think I have heard of

one Cervantes, but he does not live here at present."

"Do you know anything of Don Quixote?"

"Oh, yes. He was a great *caballero*, who lived in the *pueblo* (township) some years ago. His house is over the way, on the other side of the *plaza*, with the arms over the door. The father of the alcalde is the oldest man in the place, and perhaps he may remember him."

This was encouraging. The author, indeed, was forgotten; but the hero of his novel had become a real man, whose house remained to testify of him to this day.

While we were undressing to go to bed, three gentlemen were announced and shown in. We begged them to be seated, and they were so, on three chairs at the end of the room; and we sat opposite, on the ends of our respective beds, to hear what they might have to communicate. A venerable old man opened the conference.

"We have understood, gentlemen, that you have come hither, seeking for information respecting the famous Don Quixote, and we have come to give you such information as we may; but perhaps

you will understand me better if I speak in Latin."

"We have learnt the Latin at school, but are more accustomed to converse in the Castillian—pray proceed."

"I am the *medico* of the place; an old man, as you see; and what little I know has reached me by tradition. It is reported that Cervantes was paying his addresses to a young lady, niece of the then alcalde, whose name was Quijana, or Quijada. The alcalde disapproving of the suit put him into a dungeon under his house, and kept him there a year. Once he escaped and fled, but he was taken in Toboso and brought back. Cervantes wrote Don Quixote as a satire on the alcalde, who was a very proud man, full of chivalresque ideas. You can see the dungeon to-morrow. But you should also see the *batanes* (water-mills) of the Guadiana, whose (*golpear*) clapping so terrified Sancho Panza. They are at about three leagues' distance. Going a little further you will see a powder-mill, and will be astonished at the water-power. Ah! in your country these things would be fructified, but here we take advantage of nothing. My house is at your dispo-

sition, Señores. We are proud to receive, with all courtesy, strangers who come here, doing honour to the memory of our illustrious townsman. If you will favour my house to-morrow, at five o'clock, on your return from the *batanes*, it will give me great pleasure to conduct you to the house of Quijana, and the dungeon where Cervantes wrote."

They departed, and we went to bed.

Next morning we were up early, and leaving our alforjas behind cantered away much more lightly than usual. After about a league and a half we got to a slight dip, which gradually deepened into a shallowish valley. Passing a ruinous Moorish castle on the left (which, by the way, I wonder Cervantes made no use of), we came at last to the mills. These clumsy ancient machines are composed of a couple of huge wooden mallets, slung in a timber frame-work, which being pushed out of the perpendicular by knobs on a water-wheel, clash back again alternately in two troughs, pounding severely whatever may be put in between the face of the mallet and the end of the trough, into which water runs. I believe they are used for washing cloth.

They were not working when we arrived, but the gushing of the waters over the dam frightened the Moor so much, that I had a struggle to get him past, in order to tether him to a descendant of those tall trees, under which the knight and squire waited for the dawn in so great perturbation. During this struggle, arrived three sturdy knaves in shaggy sheepskin garments, two of them with muskets over their shoulders.

When I had tethered the Moor, I discovered I had lost a pistol from the loosened folds of my *faja;* and on going back to look for it where I had wrestled with the Moor, it was not to be found. I asked the men, but they had not seen it. While I was still looking, and was growing somewhat disheartened, for the pistol was H——'s, and its loss would break his second pair, the men began to move off. One of them was already fifty yards away. Remembering, in the other case a day or two ago, we had been sorry not to have searched the muleteer, and H—— being out of the way in the thicket tying up the Cid, so that I had nobody to consult, I ventured on the impulse of the occasion to suggest to the two men

who remained—"that as they had formed part of the premises when I lost my pistol, and were about to convey themselves away, I should not feel satisfied unless I also searched their pockets." They slightly objected, saying, they were honourable men, and had not seen my pistol; however I did it and found nothing.

I now ran after the other man, and overtook him about two hundred yards further on. He was the sturdiest villain of the three, and stoutly denying he knew anything of my pistol, told me to go back and look where I lost it. I again informed him that at the time of my loss he had been a part of the premises. Moreover that I had searched his companions.

"But you shall not search me," he said, taking his gun from his shoulder and holding it ready. I observed that it had a fresh bright copper cap on the nipple, so that it might possibly go off—but I reflected that if he had the pistol and I continued resolute, he would probably rather give it up than fight, as I had my revolver still in my *faja*. So I advanced upon him as he retreated, keeping my eye upon him, and my hand

on my revolver, so as not to let him have the first shot if possible.

Just at the moment when I thought the combat was about to commence, and was on the point of drawing my weapon, he, I suppose, seeing I was in earnest, and meant to see the adventure through to the end, fell soft and said—"You shall have your pistol." He rather opened the flap of his *zamarra* and I saw the muzzle of the pistol peeping out of an inside pocket.

As he still showed a reluctance to part with it, without much politeness I at once grabbed it with my left hand, still keeping my right on the revolver.

So I left him with a *Vaya Vmd. con Dios*, and came back in great glee to tell H—— what a great feat of (small) arms I had performed. He, like the captain in the ballad of "Billy Taylor," very much applauded what I had done.

The day was hot, and we began to make preparations for a bath above the mill-dam, putting the saddles and cloaks and clothes and pistols in a heap, over which one was to mount guard while the other bathed.

As H—— was undressing, our friends of the late transaction came back with a large herd of goats, for they were *cabreros*, to go over the bridge at the dam. The principal thief looked rather ashamed of himself, and said, I suppose by way of excuse,—

"If it had not been for me you would never have found your pistol."

"If it had not been for you I should never have had any chance of losing it, that I know of. As it is I feel more obliged to my good luck and the other pistol (patting the revolver's butt), than to you."

"That is truly a formidable weapon—how many barrels may it have?"

"*Seis tiros bien cuentados—salen uno tras otro; y dichoso es Vmd. que no tuve precision de matar a Vmd. o media docena tales.*" I need not translate this little piece of braggadocio. He also admired our other arms, knives, daggers, &c.; and pointing to the pistol he had lately had in his possession, with a lingering sentiment of affection, he said "*buena boca tiene aquella.*" (She has a pretty mouth.) It had a very large bore for so small a

pistol, carrying a ball of about ten to the pound. As he went away on the other side of the river, (we having enjoined them to betake themselves to a decent distance while we bathed,) he said in a contrite manner,—

"*Perdonad me hombre!*" which being freely translated means, "Pardon me, that's a good fellow." "*Ya le hé perdonado,*" I replied, and we saw no more of him.

Both of us having bathed in the cold, clear pool, H—— began to sketch the mill, and I to try to set it in motion. It was very old and rickety. The half rotten wheel had lost some of its paddles, and was so soddened and heavy that I could not for a long while, by stamping and kicking, get it round a foot or so, to let the gush of water come upon anything it could take hold of: and it was so slippery, I was afraid that if I set it off it might knock us down and dash me to pieces in the sluice. At last I got it to go, and round went the splashing wheel. Bang—bang—bang—went the ponderous hammers in the sloppy trough. After about twenty strokes, however, one of the great hammers fell out with a crash, and the wheel was locked. So I gave it up

and began to sketch. For this I had not patience, it being a complicated job to give an idea of the machinery; but while H—— drew, I wrote in my journal.

While I wrote, two men, who had come up unperceived, stood before me in sheepskin breeches with broad belts, and an escopet a-piece.

"*Adios señores*, whence are you?"

"From Seville," we replied.

"Are you not foreigners?"

"*Retratistas* (portrait painters) at your service—would you like your portrait taken at three reals?"

"Not thus," said he, pointing to his sheepskin inexpressibles; "but I have a wife lives not half a league further up the valley; I should like to have her portrait taken."

"I am sorry we have not time to go further, we have to be back at Argamasilla at five; whom may we have the honour to speak with?"

"The Guardia Mayor."

"Will your worship smoke?" offering him a cigarillo.

"Thank you, we have tobacco."

"*Tomad hombre,*" said I, with much cordiality. The fact was I wished to draw a cloud before the eyes of these officials, to prevent them from observing that I had broken the rotten old mill, which they would have as much felt it incumbent on them to punish me for, as if it had been the soundest institution in Spain.

Before going away we hewed two pieces of wood out of the huge, decayed stump of a tree which must have been growing in Don Quixote's time, as relics.

On our return to the Posada, we found the *medico* waiting for us; and proceeded to the house of Quijana. A civil old woman brought a lamp, and we went down a flight of seven steps into a long, narrow, round-arched vault. This damp and dismal apartment is about ten feet broad, and twenty-four feet long, and seven feet high, along the middle of the vault. She said, with as much certainty as if she had been on the spot at the time and brought him his meals, that Cervantes sat at this end (turning to the left from the entrance), and he was allowed a lamp to write by.

We tried to fancy him there. A smallish, spare,

high-featured man, with long hair, and a neglected beard—a manta or two from his bed wrapped round his legs and thrown over his shoulders; he sits, scratching away by fits and starts, in a quaint, beady hand, illegible to us moderns as we peep inquisitively at the papers before him. Now and then he pauses and looks at the flame of the lamp—a smile flickers over the worn features—some bright idea has crossed his mind—ha! ha!—it is very droll indeed; he laughs aloud. We wonder the damp, dull echo of his prison-roof does not startle and chill his hilarity. But he is used to it, and takes no heed of where he is. His fancy is lit—he is free now, and revelling in some merry scene, which is word by word trickling into immortality from the nib of that worn and grub-nosed quill. Oh, thou rare heart, bright focus of human sympathies, which in one book couldst stuff so much good fellowship and wit and truth, that all thy fellow-men, generation after generation, must go on reading it for ever and a day; while every one of the millions who read, feels towards thee as a personal friend!

The *medico* afterwards took us to see the church

which is rather handsome inside, with large round columns. It is unfinished; for Miguel Lopez, the architect, died before it was done. He also insisted on taking us to the *casino* and introducing us to the élite of Argamasillian society. We were ravenously hungry, not having eaten since our breakfast at half-past six in the morning, and it was now seven. A large body of the *casino* accompanied us to our hostel, and we had to go through the ceremony of asking them all to dine on one *pollo con arroz* (chicken and rice), which they politely declined, and retired. All except one man; whom we had not remarked before, but who was evidently a soldier of fortune, and had made up his mind to dine with us if it could be done. Seeing that he had a hungry and malevolent look, we only pressed him very slightly, and set to ourselves.

He sat in our room and entertained us with his conversation in the French language which he spoke well, but in a stiff and precise manner. He had lived at Bayonne some years, probably obliged to quit Spain for some political offence.

He had also learnt French opinions, and probably read a little of Voltaire's writings. As he dragged

in his unbelief by the head and shoulders, saying that Christianity was "la religion des singes." I said, in an indifferent sort of tone, "C'est bien possible, mais cela n'empêche point que le Christianisme soit bon pour l'homme, qui est le plus grand des singes." I also took occasion to use "plus bêtes que des philosophes" as an intensative of common folly.

When dinner was over the *medico* appeared again, and the *alcalde* of the town, and others. We shortly adjourned to the house of the *medico*, where he gave us honey from Cuenca, which is celebrated for its bees, and *aguardiente*.

By the bye, you know from Baeza, we were aiming across country to Cuenca; but finding that we should necessarily pass within one day's journey of Don Quixote's country, we thought it a pity to pass it by: so instead of going on by Infantes, San Clemente and Valverde, as our first plan was, we turned back at Venta Quemada, towards the great road, which we reached at Manzanares, and now we shall go straight on to Madrid, and leave our ponies there to rest, which they will want very much, while we make expeditions to Cuenca, Toledo, &c., by diligence.

Ten or twelve more people stepped in, one after another, at the *medico's*, and when we went away, accompanied us back to the posada, where we thanked them all for their *finura* and *politica*, and bade them good night. By the fuss they make with us, and by our having nothing to pay for seeing the dungeon, we argue that this pilgrimage is not very commonly made.

Next morning at eight we started to ride to the Venta Quesada. It was a fine day, and we were in good spirits, talking over our adventures of the day before. There had been a grumbling old woman at the posada, who reminded us of Mrs. Gummidge, in David Copperfield; and it was a natural transition from the Cervantes of the locality, to our own Cervantes of the present day.

I have always looked upon Pickwick (which will live as Dickens's great work) as a free translation of Don Quixote, into the manners of modern England. Mr. Pickwick, in the simple enthusiasm of his heart, resolves to be the redresser of grievances. Sam Weller, the shrewd and humorous valet, is the natural Sancho of British low life; always ready, like his prototype, with a quaint and homely

common-sense view, to contrast with the flighty visions of his master. Jingle is Gines de Pasamonte, Wardle the hospitable sylvan duke. I remember once asking Lord Jeffrey about this likeness between Pickwick and Quixote, and he said it had not struck him before, but he thought there was some truth in it.

Cervantes was older when he wrote Don Quixote, and had seen a great deal more of the world. If Dickens had lost his arm at Lepanto — been a captive at Algiers—and seen twenty years of the very miscellaneous life of a soldiering poet in those romantic days, I see no reason to think he might not have written as good a book as Don Quixote. As it is, the deficiencies of the models he worked from are reflected in his work. But the singular and surpassing genius he displayed, at once gave him a blaze of popularity, too rapid for safety. Instead of going on improving his taste, and struggling earnestly to produce some perfect work which should live for ever, and be a wonder to coming times (as he would have done, if he had not succeeded so rapidly), he fell to imitating himself profusely; as if he meant to out-Herod

Herod—or, to use a more simple expression, play the Dickens with himself. And he would have done it before this, had not his exquisite genius struggled with a much less exquisite taste; for his mind cannot help yielding gems, however little careful he is to set them as they deserve.

That is why the young men of the present day prefer Thackeray to Dickens. Thackeray has seen more of the world they live in. Besides, he has more power of putting a story cleverly together; which, I believe, critics (who are usually men that have the education of authors, without sufficient genius to write good books, or rashness to write bad) call the *divine* creative power. I take this to be merely imagination corrected by knowledge of the world. If there is less of the high poetical element in Thackeray's writing, he has the power of framing a much more consistent and credible body of fiction. Dickens imagines, as it were, through a microscope, and patches the minutely painted pictures together higgledy-piggledy. Thackeray takes the whole of his history into his telescopic field. In fact he imagines in larger pieces. Rash and inexperienced young men are much more capable of discovering inconsistencies,

than of appreciating samples of the high poetical element. Besides, there is a natural love of completeness in the human mind, which makes men like a good, sound turnip better than a damaged melon. I think Thackeray is only second to Fielding, as Dickens is only second to Cervantes in their two several lines; and the first treads closer on the heels of his great master than the second; but then Cervantes was a greater man than Fielding.

I suppose Thackeray, when he has done lecturing England on his humourists, will go and make his ovation through America. It is taking an instalment out of posthumous fame. A European author, whose works they have long been reading with avidity, is treated on his arrival in the other world, as Pope or Addison would be, if they came back for half a year's visit to this. "The Atlantic is to us a century," is the finest sentence that clever coxcomb, N. P. Willis, ever wrote. However, let us give everybody his due; he understands the public he writes for, and is a successful swine-feeder—a skilful manufacturer of artificial pearls to cast before them.

This is not a conversation, but a *résumé* of the opinions to which we mutually contributed our

suggestion and assent. If you should happen to meet any of the distinguished persons mentioned, don't tell them, for it might vex them to be so unscrupulously handled by two rash, illiterate young men, who have scarcely any right to an opinion at all. Mind you tell anybody you may show this letter to, that it is in confidence.

A quantity of impertinent, twittering swallows kept skimming about us as we rode along; perhaps criticising us as we were criticising our betters. I took out my revolver and tried to take aim as they turned on the wing, sometimes within three or four yards. "What odds would you bet," said I, "that I don't hit one out of my six shots?"

"If you kill one I'll eat it."—"Raw?" said I—"Raw."—"Feathers and all?"—"No, not feathers."—"Well, it wants shooting off, so here goes!"—of course I missed all the shots.

We now began to consider what we should do, on our visit to the celebrated *venta*. It was proposed and seconded that we should revive, in the person of the present *ventero*, the right, as by tenure, of investing fit and proper persons with the order of knighthood. If he was a man of any humour, like the real

ventero in Don Quixote's time, he would easily enter into the joke. But what should we call the order? As there was nothing remaining of the old premises but the well, it was suggested we should be called "*Caballeros de la orden del pozo*" (Knights of the order of the Well). He should slap our shoulders with his *navaja,* for want of a better sword, and sprinkle us with a little water from the well. We would previously watch our pistols and daggers for the space of time in which we could smoke a cigarillo, and it should be counted a vigil.

Engaged in such discourse, it suddenly occurred to us that the road had disappeared in the midst of a rough field, and we had a considerable amount of trouble and anxiety before we got to the *camino real,* and when there, we found we had emerged more than half a league too far on, and went back about two miles in the direction of Manzanares, before we came to the Venta Quesada.

In the distance, curiously enough, it *did* look like a castle, as Don Quixote took it to be. There were two embattled turrets, which had been built in the war time, when this was made a military station. We entered the court-yard of this building, supposing

it to be the venta, but the soldiers pointed us through a doorway further on. As we were going through, a soldier started up and cried—

"Hollo! come back! where are your passports?"

"Who are you?" said I, "that have so little idea how you should address gentlemen of distinction? After we have attended to our beasts we will attend to you."

"Gentlemen of distinction, indeed! you look more like Andalusian *contrabandistas*. Come here, sirs!"

"Come to us, if you have anything to say, you varlet of an inconsequent *militar!*" Here we went into the wretched little shed of a stable, and two soldiers followed us. After we had set barley before our ponies, we said, "Now, if you will ask civilly, to see our papers, we will show you them, though it is exceedingly probable you cannot read." On seeing their great size, and the complication of signatures and stamps attached to our passports, they became civiller, and began to exculpate themselves; a polite corporal came up and tried to smooth down the contention. But our opponents, finding our papers were all right, now hit on a new point of attack in our pistols. We showed our license to carry arms.

"Yes," said they, "an *escopet*, but these pistols are forbidden weapons, and require a special license."

"Nothing is forbidden to Englishmen," I remarked, in a confident manner, as if I was delivering a well-known axiom, "besides, it is specified in the papers that we are *personas de toda confianza*." This clenched our defence. So we went and ate a very dirty potato-omelette. Afterwards we found the well; but it did not come up to our expectations, having been plastered up new. However, there was the old trough cracked through the middle. I chipped a little bit off for a relic, or rather a *trophy*. H —— sketched the well. I sat before the venta door on a stool, writing at my journal, while the *ventero*, a bad-looking young man, with round, idiotic eyes, played at cards with his wife, who was older and more disagreeable in appearance than himself.

We thought no more about the *orden del pozo;* but rode away as soon as the ponies had eaten their corn. Near the point where we had emerged upon the *camino real*, there was a great new venta, outwardly fair to view; but, when we came to inquire for beds, it proved to be unfinished, and full

of bricks and mortar of emptiness. The people here had seen us go by before, and now asked what we had been to see at the venta Quesada. We told them it was because the famous Don Quixote had been there. "Ah," said the landlord, "I myself have the fourth volume of his history, and know all about the beautiful Dulcinea del Toboso."

A little after sun-down we reached Villarta. Lent ended yesterday, I believe, and we certainly saw more meat consumed at this venta than we have yet seen on our way altogether. We got some excellent fried ham, the first unroesty sample we have met with since Seville, except of course in the great towns.

As we sat in our apartment, before going to bed, a conversation arose, I don't remember out of what, concerning a future state, and whether it would be final or not. H —— thought it would, otherwise it would be very unsatisfactory, if, after we had been buffeted through this world with an expectation of final peace in the next, we were to find there was yet a struggle and an uncertainty beyond the grave.

"Yes, but we may wake and remember nothing of this state in the next, having in the baby germ of our nature the seeds of all the improvement our life

in this world has wrought in us: and go to work fresh again, with as much spirit and cheerfulness as a man who went to sleep weary and dawled overnight, sets to his task again next morning."

"That is more unsatisfactory still—for then we should forget all those friendships, and ties of affection and kindred which alone make life tolerable."

"But you must remember that all these ties and relations have been formed in this planet; and such, nay better, may be formed in the next. We cannot tell but what we may meet the same souls again, though we do not remember them; nor can we be sure that we are not here drawn towards the friends of some state prior to this, by a previous though unremembered sympathy. Life as it is is well worth having; there is much more pleasure than pain in it."

"I do not know that: doubt makes us miserable."

"It don't make me miserable. I feel quite satisfied that I am in the hands of All-Wisdom, and All-Love, and All-Power, and I argue from past experience that I shall be treated better than I deserve. I am happy now, and thankful for my life. I am neither hungry, nor thirsty, nor cold. I

am for the present interested with this discussion. If I want to smoke I can light my pipe, and if I grow sleepy I can go to bed, and these are the only pressing wants likely to occur. I am prepared to go through fifty thousand worlds, and with fifty thousand deaths between, so long as each (whether I can remember or compare them or not) be intrinsically better than the one before, and enjoyment continue to bear the same proportion to anxiety. As long as we can imagine any perfection to which we have not attained, we shall not rest quite satisfied. Perfect happiness, like all other perfection, can belong only to the Deity. It is only in the gradual approach and advancement towards this state that the happiness of inferior natures can lie. We are made after God's own image, which probably means that the nature of man contains in vague embryo, and much clogged besides with the material engine through which it now has to operate, a germ of all those attributes which in their fulness and splendour of perfection constitute the Being who created him. It is therefore impossible to over-estimate the height of glory to which man is capable of growing. But we see here that his progress is slow, and the pre-

sumption is, there will be many, in fact endless states, 'because,' as Tennyson says in that sublime speculation (the Two Voices)—'because the scale is infinite.' So we may go on, 'moving up from high to higher,' till 'we lose ourselves in light.'"

"Well, but what does your theory make of those who go the wrong way?"

"Why, of course, they move down from low to lower, till they lose themselves in darkness. As the first become 'angels and ministers of grace,' the others become demons, and ministers of disgrace: and as the terminus of the one is perfection, that of the other is annihilation."

You will naturally say that H —— does not play his fair part in these conversations; but I have not the same faculty for remembering what he said as my own lucubrations. For like many other arguers we are usually busy constructing our reply, when we should be listening to our antagonist. But my lamp is going out, so farewell. H —— has been long in bed, and "after" discussion's "fitful fever he sleeps well." I believe these long-winded letters will shorten my days: they certainly shorten my nights. I keep well, and stand my hard work like

a man, though I am rather thin or so; but I have no cough, and what remains of me is good working-material. And it is all the better for the Moor that I ride a lightish weight. The lamp is burning very dim indeed. Farewell once more.

LETTER XVIII.

MADRID, *April* 16.

HERE we are safely arrived in Madrid. Our way from Villarta hither has not been fruitful in adventures, and the scenery could not easily have been more dreary and desolate. The only variation of the vast and wearisome plain consists of occasional broad, flat valleys, which look as if the surface, undermined by some volcanic action below, had given way, and gone down like the trap-door of a stage, leaving slovenly, crumbling, precipitous edges, some four or five hundred feet deep on either side.

Often the towns are hidden in these great gaps, so that there is no sign of any human habitation within the blank horizon.

We entered this sort of country at Puerto Lapiche, where we breakfasted after leaving Villarta. Here, on either side of the hills we were

deserting, stood a crowd of Don Quixote's windmills. Here he turned off the *camino real* to do penance at the *Peña pobre*. The landlord knew nothing about this last place, but had a vague idea that Don Quixote had been in the place, and *quiza* (perhaps) the history had been written here.

I don't know whether it was Don Quixote's windmills which gave a romantic turn to our discourse, but it ran upon the strange and startling occurrences which do, from time to time, chequer the usually prosy pages of real life.

"But is real life really prosy? Or does it merely appear so, because men and women bury all their life's truly stirring incident, of highest rapture and of deepest anguish, in the silent archives of the soul: and, uttering only what is common-place, make the faint echoes of written romance seem caricature? or an obsolete picture of how men thought and felt in ruder and more serious times?"

"Man is still the same. There were no black-letter editions of the human heart, nor are its feelings now a bit more gilt-edged or satin-wove than when Cheops wrote his hieroglyphic billets-doux on papyrus."

"The world has never changed, nor ever will. The only difference is, that we see too much of what is before our eyes; and familiarity breeds contempt. Great qualities alone can pierce the haze of antiquity, and thence we conclude that all were then modelled on the few we know. And those, too—how little we know them. If we were to summon up Abelard's cook-maid, and ask how her master looked on that Friday afternoon when he had just received Eloisa's most touching letter, describing how, 'as time creeps on, all human affections,' &c. (my Mabel, of course, knows it by heart, and, in confidence, I don't),—what account of Abelard would his cook-maid give? She would probably describe him as a red-nosed, testy old fellow of about fifty-eight, in a greasy old *soutane*; and that, on the particular occasion above mentioned, he was reprimanding her severely for allowing the bishop to set his foot in a dish of parsnips dressed with cream."

"To be sure. And, on the other hand, I see no reason to doubt that there are Pyramuses and Thisbes who peep at one another through opera-glasses instead of holes in the wall; and Romeos and Juliets who meet (whether at Devonshire House

or the Whittington Club balls), and love just as suddenly, desperately and fatally."

"Talking about Romeo and Juliet, do you know when I was at Warsaw, or Cracow, or somewhere, after the siege of Vienna, I saw the mummy of a beautiful princess who had died on her wedding-day; and that was all known about her; and what an open field for speculation on possible loves, disgusts, jealousies, poisonings, heart-breakings, &c., does it leave to the imagination! She had been well dried up, and there was the remnant of great beauty still traceable in the wizened features. There she lay in her glass case; a real young lady of the dark ages in her wedding-dress."

"And yet, after all, it is possible she died of *angina pectoris*, and neither poisoned herself to escape the arms of a detested bridegroom, nor was poisoned by a black-hearted rival beauty; nor broke her heart for another young man. But what times those middle-ages must have been, since, in spite of theories, one cannot help believing them to have been full of romance and adventure. Think of the Crusades; though, perhaps, our wars in India and at the Cape will seem as romantic to readers a thousand

years to come. But then, those Norman skippers, making a run of contraband lances upon the coast of a kingdom, and cutting a whole province out of its side! Then dynasties were foundedias easily as you now may get a peerage. What were *our* ancestors about, when the bastard Duke and the Guiscards were coolly taking possession of England and Naples? Why did *they* stand with their hands in their pockets, and not take a kingdom and leave it to us? But, if they had, we should only have been princes of the blood, for our elder brothers would have sacked the kingdom. And I should think it would be very indifferent fun being a prince of the blood;—all the restraint of greatness, with none of the power."

"But I don't see why we should want to be princes of the blood, and the effete descendants of some great man. Dynasties have not ceased to be formed. Napoleon was a much greater man than Alexander the Great: and Bernadotte will leave a dynasty as long as the Ptolemies. Besides, Louis Buonaparte is coming up, and will play young Octavius to his uncle's Cæsar."

"I hope he will succeed; not because I know or

care anything about his politics, but because I should like to see a real new dynasty formed, just to show people that they remain precisely in the same state as when Saul was chosen from the family of Kish to rule over Israel. Once, when I was wandering through the royal crypts of Saint Denys, and came to the massive portals (armed with bars of bronze and complicated locks and bolts), where Napoleon had prepared himself a last resting-place, I felt there was a want of completeness in his not being there, and I felt sorry. I have no sympathy with the man; but I like the incident of an emperor of half Europe being born in a country town of a little island, and turning the whole world topsy-turvy. I feel no disloyal indifference towards our excellent Queen Victoria, whom, with all her progeny, Heaven preserve! but, if it could have happened without disadvantage to her, and the dear little princes and princesses, I wish Richard Cromwell had been a competent man, and reigned over England; and that the great Oliver had died with the crown on the top of his bedstead. A change is a good thing now and then. He had very near as good a right to be king as Henry Tudor before he married the heiress of York. But

come; the ferment of Napoleon's times has not settled down yet, and we may have a chance before we die. When the revolution comes, whoever, like Themistocles, can always of a sudden say what is most fit to be said, and do what is most fit to be done, will be the Cromwell of his day.

> Shake but a scuttleful
> Of gravel, the big pebbles come a-top.
> When times are troublous, great men, jostled forth,
> Stand in the front of action. When the mind
> Is moved, great qualities, before unknown,
> Rise on emergency. For, while kind Heaven
> Is liberal of much neglected means,
> Man neither knows his weakness nor his strength,
> Till time and trial shape his destiny."

"You are getting dreadfully republican, if not revolutionary, all of a sudden. I thought you were a Tory."

"I am, as yet, a dreamer, and therefore hold all politics and creeds of which I have a sufficient smattering to form an element in the hodge-podge of my opinions. A man does not form his opinions really till he begins to act. The weight of responsibility on the shoulders is like a hydraulic press: it leaves no room for froth. But I am not sure that the most transcendental Toryism would not

be a belief such as I profess at present. Mind you, for this half-hour only. The world is nothing but a great machine for milling the souls of men. It was just as fit for the purpose in Adam's time as now. But physical and intellectual effort being a necessary part of his probation, physical truths of great commercial value and convenience are scattered liberally in his way. However these be, one by one, grubbed out by the snout of science—however systems of government shift, and split, and fall away—the world remains the same in its moral relation to the soul of man; nor does it alter, as far as I can see, in its effectual capacity of training our spiritual nature. What difference does it make to my soul whether I dig or plough, or whether I travel by mule or locomotive engine. I believe that in different ways, varying by progression, the same passions and temptations come with the same force to generation after generation; and man, with all his boasted advancement, gets no further. He is working in a spacious house of correction, with science for his tread-mill wheel. Or he is picking the arts, instead of oakum, with a vague yearning for some dimly-conceived ideal of beauty. Alas, if we come

out of our house of correction worse than we went in!"

"Yes; but, my dear sir, you must allow that man is in a better state since the spread of Christianity."

"Certainly; but that is the free gift of God, and not any merit of man's own. I argue that the only real advantage which man gets from his boasted march of intellect is physical convenience and intellectual activity. I deny any strictly moral good arising directly from the results of his labour. They will all probably perish with the world when a higher range of truth opens to our eyes, and be resolved into a mere supplementary nothing to the original nothingness out of which the world was made."

"This is profound nonsense. But to return to our sovereigns. I don't think we should be much the better for being kings; perhaps we had better be king-makers, and set up some innocent, swaggering young swell, like ——, who would reign with much dignity, and not lose much by his head when they cut it off! What should we do for ourselves? Prime ministers! No: that's rather too responsible a situation, too, in troublous times. We would set

up Lord —— to be the unpopular premier—the Strafford of his day. We would be Washingtons and Cincinnatuses, and go down to posterity with our heads on our shoulders, and a deathless glory of moderation."

"Strafford was an excellent man; a good old-fashioned, thorough-going tyrant, who kept up the aristocracy. What a piece of good luck it must have been in those days to be born a lord! Is it Macaulay tells us how a Yorkshire squire was put in prison, when Strafford was lord lieutenant of the county, for telling Lord D'Arcy's huntsman that he would horsewhip his lordship himself if he had used such language as he (the huntsman) had done? And somebody else was "clapped up," for calling the swan on some noble lord's waterman's badge a goose. In the days of *scandalum magnatum* the aristocracy was something real. Now it is almost reduced to nothing but the old prestige, which remains after the power is gone."

"Yes; but this inoffensive remnant of aristocracy has its advantages. The old prestige gives it value in the eyes of the vulgar, enough to tempt them to work up towards it, without giving the nobles the

power of tyrannising over them, unless as far as they court it by their own servility, and then they are but little to be pitied. The small civilities of one great lord make a hundred petty neighbours proud; and they heartily uphold an aristocracy with which they glory to fancy themselves identified. The chance of one peerage keeps a thousand great squires and baronets in good humour; for all men would preserve an honour to which they fondly aspire. It is this pliability and expansiveness of our aristocracy which makes it at once the most popular, wholesome, and plebeian aristocracy that ever existed."

"Then, again, the peerage is useful directly as ensuring a considerable and not very rapidly changing body of well-educated, pudding-headed politicians, used to Parliament from their teens upwards, who, though not indeed generally very energetic or suggestive in their views, yet wield a massive weight of solid, resistive prudence. They hold down our hot-headed, ingenious bagmen and calico-printers, who get into Parliament later in life, inflated with all the gas and fumes of forty thousand brilliant nostrums they have been brewing in

commercial-room discussions of twenty or thirty years on the road; men whose lengthened travels would have taught them knowledge of their country, if a vast and varied acquaintance with hedges and gates were the thing required. These men would blow the top off the commonwealth in ten years or less, if they had it all to themselves. It is wonderful how well the patched-up old rattle-trap works. 'Long live our glorious constitution!'"

We rode down into Tembleque—a cold-looking, miserable place; supped on mutton chops (evidently off some tough old ram), fried potatoes, and salad. There was a large party supping in the kitchen, and after a little conversation, one of the company asked us if we were Andalusians. An older man answered for us, "the dress is the dress of the Andaluzes, but the tongue not."

Next day we passed Ocaña. Our ponies were weak on their legs, and cut their fetlocks a good deal. I filed off the heads of some obnoxious nails, but it did little good. I then tied up the wounded fetlock in a silk handkerchief, so that the Moor could do it no more harm for the present, but he was already rather lame. At Ocaña we left the

main road for a short cut which came out at Montivola—a village chiefly formed of troglodyte habitations, burrowed out of the loamy hill; and from the flats above the village, we saw a fine range of snow mountains which must be beyond Madrid.

Here we descended to a somewhat lower level. Towards dusk we came in sight of water, a large sheet. At first we took it for the Tagus, but it turned out to be a small lake where innumerable frogs were croaking vociferously. I fired my revolver in among them, and they stopped a moment and then began louder than ever, as if the report had given them a fresh topic of conversation. After a while we descended into the valley of the Tagus.

Aranjuez seemed a pretty place, full of trees and gardens, quite a paradise after the dreary country through which we had just travelled, but unluckily it was very nearly dark when we got there. The *moza*, with whom I had carried on a considerable conversation while she was arranging the beds, ended by asking me whether I was an Andaluz. It appears our disguise is beginning to take effect. The Castillians have a great contempt for the orthoepy of their southern neighbours, so that it

is but a slight compliment to our Spanish when done.

Next morning we passed out of Aranjuez. It is a picturesque gay, tea-garden-looking town; full of brick and stucco colonnades and gingerbread triumphal arches, and avenues of really fine trees, and glittering fountains, and bridges and waterfalls, and flowers and statues and columns; altogether making a brilliant though somewhat French and artificial ensemble. The palace has a faint resemblance to the Tuileries. I dare say it is a very pleasant place for the Court to lounge through the hot summer months.

Along the last seventy or eighty miles of road, we have seen, every mile or so, a party of *camineros*, with muskets pitched and implements to mend the way. All, without one exception, have been either eating, drinking, smoking, or sleeping; to-day, however, we actually saw one of them tightening his belt, as if he really was going to work. We wondered whether Dean Swift had ever seen Spain—Laputa has a Spanish sound. Baited at Val de Moro. Soon after leaving this place we topped a long rise, and saw Madrid about eight or nine miles before us.

It was a better-looking place than we had imagined—a good, compact mass of towers and steeples and pinnacles crowning the brow of a hill. We forded the Manzanares, which was broad and deepish for us on our little ponies. It was now dusk, and the soldier at the *octroi* stopped us as suspicious-looking countrymen, likely to be smugglers.

"Whom have we here?" cried he.

"*Caballeros Ingleses en viage,*" I replied glibly; and it appeared we so little came up to his ideas of English gentlemen on their travels, that he preferred to consider it as an excellent joke.

"Ha, ha, ha! *You* English gentlemen! You are *contrabandistas* from Malaga, more likely; and I'll be bound you have some excellent bottles in your alforjas!" Here he began feeling and ferretting in them. "Ha! the bottom is wet; there is a broken bottle in them somewhere."

"*Carajo! Señor doganero;* I should have thought you knew the water of Manzanares from the wine of Malaga. We have ridden through the river, and have no contraband drinks about us. It is a *verdad catolica* that we *are* English gentlemen,

and that the sooner you can satisfy yourself that there are only dirty shirts and stockings in our saddlebags, the sooner we shall sup; *si dios quiere.*" As he found nothing in the bottle line, he let us go. What we really were afraid he might find was our pistols; for we had heard that the law against wearing arms is much more stringently enforced in the capital than the provinces.

The Fonda de la Viscaina, to which we had been recommended by our hostess at Granada, is an apartment in the great Casa del Maragato, near the Puerta del Sol, the centre of Madrid. Thither we threaded our way by inquiry among real metropolitan crowded streets. The Puerta del Sol is not a gate, though I suppose it once was, but a not very remarkable butt end of buildings, situated between the Calle de Alcala and the Carrera San Hieronimo, which streets here form a fork, of which the Calle Mayor (still larger than either) is the handle. This butt end is principally distinguished in the darker hours by an illuminated clock-face—the Horse-Guards of Madrid.

Opposite the lofty arched portals of the Casa del Maragato, while we were debating how to attack so

huge an edifice, which bore no signs of containing any *fonda*, and looked more like some great official building, we were addressed in English:—

"Beg pardon, sir, I suppose you will be the gentlemen from Granada;—allow me to take your horses. Pedro, carry these caballeros' alforjas up into the *fonda*."

"That's all very fine, but where are you going to take our ponies to, and who are you?"

"I'm the English interpreter to the establishment. Mrs. Vasquez wrote about you coming. I'll just take the horses round to Lamb's livery stables." We felt a certain doubt whether we should ever see the Moor and Cid again; and a twitch of conscience for fear, if *we* did not give them their barley and unlace their *cinchas*, they might be badly looked after by less affectionate and accustomed hands. But we were tired and hungry, and the stable was reported to be a long way off, at which we *carajoed*, and threatened to go to a posada: but they told us there were no *posadas* with stables attached to them, except in the suburbs, so we went in under the lofty arch, and up an interminable flight of stairs. When we got there we

found the house was full. Some other gentlemen had arrived from Granada, who had been mistaken for us, and the rooms kept for us had been filled; but a story higher, a widow kept lodgings, and we might be accommodated if we would. Here, at the very top of the house, we found a very comfortable apartment. We washed and supped, and sallied forth upon the crowded lamplight. Had iced *orchata* (almond milk) at the Cafe Suizo in the Calle de Alcala. Since then, I have been writing, and it is time now to go to bed—the clock in the Puerta del Sol has just struck twelve.

I must finish off my letter for to-day's post. This morning, after breakfast, we were waited upon by a shabby, little, silly, chattering *pretendiente* or place-hunter. He had heard of us from his friends in Granada, and come to offer his services to be generally useful. I went with the English interpreter to the livery stables, where I agreed with Mr. Lamb, a most disreputable, groomy-looking rogue, with a long waistcoat, drab trousers, and a straw in his mouth, to keep the ponies at six reals each a day. H—— has been with the *pretendiente* to get our luggage out of the *galera* office. They have just

returned, and are in an altercation with the porters.

They appealed to me, and I took out my watch and said, if they did not take what was offered in the course of two minutes, they should have two reals less. Now they are gone, and I can write again. H——'s hat is dreadfully mangled—indeed desperately. He has sent out the *pretendiente* to buy him another, and borrow a fiddle. Madrid is a cheerful-looking town by daylight. At breakfast this morning we met an agreeable Englishman, a contemporary of mine at Eton, and now a fellow of King's. He got the Latin-poem-medal the same year I did the English one. We have fraternised; and already talk of making an excursion to Toledo together. His name is B——.

We shall stay here a fortnight or three weeks, till we have made our excursions and seen the place. And then, oh happy thought, a short ride of four or five hundred miles will bring us to the Pyrenees, where diligences and railways and steamboats will bear me almost as "swift as meditation on the wings of love" to the feet of my Mabel.

Ah, how much the apparently unimportant fact,

that those pretty little feet at present go tripping about upon my native soil, adds to the patriotic yearning I feel to see once more the white cliffs of Albion. What is patriotism? Nothing but the love of my country, because it happens to be *my* country, the land of *my* ancestors—*my* home—to say nothing of being the somewhat ample shrine of *my* little patroness-saint. The true, unselfish, etherial, abstract sort of thing would be to feel patriotism because it was somebody else's country. But it is post time: so I kiss your hands.

LETTER XIX.

MADRID, *April* 22.

AN hour and more I have been moping with my head in my hand, and my elbows on my blotting-book; and have now scarcely heart to dip my pen in the ink. Oh, my Mabel, your letter has made me very miserable. I see your sunny eyes clouded with a reproachful sadness; your cheeks are pale; and those sweet lips wear something more than the pretty playful shades of discontent on which my muse has said or sung—

> By contrast to beguile,
> Those sweet lips pouting close;
> And fold the coming smile,
> As rosebuds hide the rose.

It makes me very sad to think you have been feeling ill, and in lôw spirits; and I am very much shocked to learn that you were reduced to so desperate a pass for want of amusement, as to turn over my letters, and try to pick evidence, out of so

hasty and unguarded a style of correspondence, to prove that I don't love you quite as much as I ought. I am also very sorry to hear of the demise of the poor little canary you were so good as to christen Jorgito after me. Poor little fellow, he won't disturb our most interesting conversations with his twitterings any more.

Now, if I was to follow the natural bent of my own compassionate and sympathising bosom, I should here begin to pity you very much, and condole, and say fifty silly and affectionate things in a breath, I mean a sigh. But my experience in heart-complaints leads me to suppose that the proper treatment of a young lady, with your symptoms, is a good course of tonic scolding, which I don't doubt will set you right in a day or two. In the first place, my dear madam, we must let three or four ounces of tears.

Don't be alarmed! These are the bandages of discretion, that we may not weep to death; and this little keen-pointed weapon, sheathed in the shell of the deliberate tortoise, is the lancet of common sense. Love you as much as I ought? Of course I don't? Who does anything as much as he ought, or

she ought either? But it is equally true that I do love you as much as it is in my nature to love a troublesome little mass of angelic imperfections, who has the misfortune to be more pretty than good, and more fascinating than amiable.

Don't try to deceive *me*, even at a thousand miles off! I see straight through the whole millstone. You have had a bad cold, and been moped up in your room during this long thaw, with sloppy snow on the ground. You have been alone, and had no bad romantic sympathising young lady to sing "Dark and Dreary" with you, and disbosom mutual ways and means of melancholy (I should say woes and moans), till some cheerful topic of gossip "fluttered up, self-poised, upon a lightsome wing." You want to stab me here in sunny Spain with the icy "daggers" which Albion's vernal gales have been "making at your sharpened eaves." I will have no such eaves-droppings. You must take them back at once. Now for my prescription:

I. Gallop X m^{les} p^{r} diem.

(When taken to be well shaken).

CORAZON DE PIEDRA, M.D.

'Twas a mournful young lady called Mabel,
She said "My existence grows sable!"
She yawned and she sighed—
But they told her to ride
On the pony that stood in the stable.

Said the mournful young lady called Mabel,
"Sir Woe to ride too may be able;
But I 'll do as you bid
Of Sir Woe to get rid,
If you 'll bind him at home with a cable."

Oh, mournful young lady called Mabel,
Woe sits with a chair and a table,
But Woe on the saddle, he
Gets on very badly,
And could *not* go the pace with my Mabel.

Woe travels, my sorrowful Mabel,
In a slow train—all stations, per way-bill:
With his heart in a hamper
Like fish—only damper—
Marked "Glass—this side up," on the label.

When Woe does not visit my Mabel,
His home is a leaky old gable;
With starved babes and spouse,
At the top of a house
As tall as the tower of Babel.

Oh, mournful young lady called Mabel,
If there *be* any truth in my fable,
You will see that this slow,
Solemn, stupid old Woe
Has no business to bother my Mabel.

Here are some words which I recommend you to set to a solemn air, and sing to yourself when you

are melancholy; remembering that I was very melancholy when I wrote them, in the centre of a strange land, far away "from that mournful young lady" whom I love far better than I could say in the most serious rhymes. I have written all this nonsense, partly for the sake of making you laugh, if possible, and partly as people will often talk absurdities when they don't know exactly what to say, which was very much my case.

I can only hope and pray that your health and spirits may be better. When you come up to town after Easter, a little gaiety will do you good; and if the melancholics hold out so long, I shall be there by the end of May, or thereabouts, to argue with the azure sprites by word of mouth. I send a little silver charm to wear round your neck, which perhaps may give you a good turn in the meantime. I have worn it ever since I got it in Seville, and think it has, on the whole, brought me luck, for I am very superstitious, as you know: but your luck and mine I consider as the same thing; and where my heart is, there shall my little treasure be also. How serious I am about trifles! and how trifling about serious things! "But say, it is my humour!"

I am getting into the nonsense love-letter style again, which I thought I had fairly given up, to become the grave historian of unimportant incidents, and the reporter of but slightly edifying conversations. I have a good deal to tell you, which, because I have kept no journal since we reached Madrid, I must tell you now, or I shall forget all about it, and have no materials to work upon.

Oh stern necessity of authors to be always preserving and potting the amusement of the day for future profit. Oh, literature, literature! thou art indeed a base and servile trade. From suggestive scraps here and there out of these melancholy matter-of-fact rambling epistles, which I pen in unambitious confidence to the lady of my heart, I shall have to construct a brisk and sparkling narrative of things which never happened, and sentiments I never felt: and all because the British public has an acquired taste for artificial writing, as they have for doctored wines. The pure vintage of the heart, like genuine clarets, seems poor and sour. It must be brandied with forced hilarity, and Burgundied with a body of rich and racy shams. It must have a bouquet of chemically prepared sentiment, and then it is fit

to be volumed from the rough cask of MS., and decanted into the reviews.

We shall have to write something very careful this time to establish our reputations, for we are getting stricken in years (H—— and I are 25 and 26), and if we *are* to be famous, we ought to make haste; for what's the fun of being famous when we are fat, puffy men of 40. Every body is famous then; it is too common to be worth mentioning.

> But fame when young, if there's a possibility
> Of getting it, is worth the wear and tear:
> It almost equals money or nobility
> To help you to the candid world's esteem—
> Their dinners, balls, and general civility,
> Which *are* worth having—so at least I deem;
> For good society is after all
> The best—and the consolidated cream, &c.

I quote from an unpublished piece in *terza rima*, by my favourite poet, that is of course myself, written when I was about eighteen; and, in confidence, I don't see I write any better now than I did then. But, to be sure, I know better what is not worth writing. Criticism and prudence, and acquired facts to work upon, are all, or nearly all, a man gets by years, more than he had when he was a boy. Perhaps a little more mental endurance, but I don't

think the actual creative energy of the mind increases much after fifteen or sixteen.

What wonderful prospective dramas both boys and girls of that time of life imagine themselves the heroes and heroines of! If I ever write a novel, I will certainly begin with my hero at seventeen, and leave him at twenty, very much the same as I found him in a practical point of view—but having gone through a splendid career of romance and experience.

By the way, Vivian Grey is an excellent instance of the success of this. With an older hero, whom you are led to believe is in every way fitted to become a prominent man in his country, you begin, towards the end of the third volume, to wonder why he is not Secretary of State or Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the fact that these offices are filled by other functionaries destroys the truth-seeming of the tale; whereas the triumphs and glory of a boy are all permitted to be legitimately in the clouds, and we look upon them with the same un-matter-of-fact feelings as on a gorgeous sunrise.

Now I must tell you a little about how we have been passing the last week or so, since our arrival in

La Corte, for so Madrid is called. After gaping and staring about us in a bewildered sort of way for a day or two, we agreed to go to Toledo with Mr. A—— B——. We caused the *pretendiente*, who proves a very inefficient pretender (in fact, a frightened, half-witted, chattering, melancholy impostor), to inquire about the most convenient way of going. He went hither and thither, and made a great to do, but could not form an opinion between the advantages of the direct diligence, and the railway to Aranjuez. We selected the latter, and having conveyed ourselves to the station, found that we had an hour and a quarter to wait. This was an unlucky start, but by the help of conversation we got through the interregnum.

When we reached Aranjuez, we of course made diligent inquiry for the Toledo *diligencia*, and learnt that it started from a *posada* about three quarters of a mile off. Hurrying to secure places, we were told at the *Posada de Santa Isabel* that the diligence had gone to the station. Rushing back to the station, we found that the diligence had been waiting there all the time, but out of sight behind some buildings; and had lately started in apathetic despair of

passengers, quite empty, for Toledo. Its conductor had probably been smoking the cigar of resignation, while he ought to have been looking for travellers; and the railway officials, of whom we had inquired, had not thought fit to do his business for him.

With sundry maledictions on the way affairs are managed in the Peninsula, we entered the town once more, and inquired for a private conveyance: but the charges were so high, and the rate of going so slow, that it appeared to us the cheapest and simplest way, to pass the afternoon (which had now turned out fine, after an unpromising morning) in Aranjuez; and return by rail to take the direct diligence after all.

So we made the best of our unfortunate experiment, and loitered about among the gardens and pleasure-grounds and groves, discoursing peripatetic philosophy on many subjects, but chiefly education; apropos of B—— having that morning received a letter, calling him up to Eton, as a master.

To me—leaving Eton as a little boy of fourteen, and sealing up, as one always does, my memories of the place as I left it, without allowance for changes moving on unseen—it seemed strange, and a sudden accession of great age to myself, to find a boy of the

form below me, all at once become one of those dreaded potentates—vicegerents of Jupiter himself—wrapped in a rustling cloud of dignity and black silk.

To B——, however—who had grown up at Eton, and known some slight foretaste of his present responsibilities as a sixth-form-boy, and still more as captain of the school—who had lived with present masters as companions, both at Eton and King's—the appointment suggested a long future of patient drudgery, among troublesome little boys, contrasted with the happy recollections of his own school days.

We consoled him over his good fortune (for you must know that an Eton mastership is a very comfortable thing in many points of view, and all good fortune has its drawbacks), by placing his profession in the most poetical light we could. While he and H—— sat on a magnificently carved but dampish marble bench, I, who was afraid it might, as the phrase is, strike cold if I sat down, stood before them, and delivered something like the following charge, whose intermittent pauses in the cigar-puff were taken up by the bubbling murmurs of that quaintly-graven fountain whose portrait by the great Velasquez hangs in the Royal gallery of Madrid.

"When a man enters upon any profession, he is always met in the vestibule of it by a troublesome crowd of attendant difficulties and disadvantages. And this is well; for the incompetent may as well be disheartened at once, while the able master has to study the characters of those unwilling underlings he will have to rule and correct.

"Let us consider these difficulties and disadvantages. There is a daily trial of patience with refractory little imps. A daily pounding over the same short road of juvenile study. There is the temptation to neglect—the temptation to tyranny—the temptation to favouritism. A short-sighted, ambitious man might slur over the education of his boys, to cultivate his own mind. A hasty man might easily slip into the habit of using his almost despotic power without due conscientious consideration. An enthusiastic man would naturally be led to devote all his attention to promising and congenial pupils, to the neglect of others.

"You may say such a profession is a death to ambitious prospects. I answer; that a calling in which a young man acquires scrupulous care, discrimination, and justice, cannot be throwing time away;

and that learning to rule boys is the first step towards ruling men. You will say, 'There is no instance! A man gets lazy, and loses his mettle like a horse in a mill. A pedagogue never becomes anything more.'

"Great men are rare, I answer, and still rarer are those who have grown great in comfortable situations.

"But say that the profession of a teacher leads to nothing but a very improbable bishopric, which is of no service to a layman's anticipations. What is ambition of any reasonable and noble kind, but a desire to influence the minds of men in your day. Agreed; but you think it an unsatisfactory substitute to influence the minds of boys. All ambition is too greedy of rapid results. Those boys will be men—and when do you think you will find their minds so open and accessible to worthy influences as in the tender and comparatively pure season of their youth?

"Do you think if you were a clever, harassed leader of the House of Commons, with a pack of wrong-headed country-gentlemen at your back, you would be influencing the mind of your fellow-creatures more effectually?

"I know it is difficult to influence without being a companion as well as a teacher; and it is difficult not to lose some of the magisterial awe and grandeur in that familiar frankness which alone can make a man agreeable to boys. But, however the shams of this world demand reserve, whatever is real may be safely open and free. True power comes from real capability, true dignity from real virtue. A truly capable and good man will never lose his power or his dignity among his boys by being too familiarly known: familiarity only breeds contempt when the person we are familiar with is more or less contemptible, which, I fear, in some points is more or less the case with us all.

"To be a good teacher requires a more perfect combination of great and well-balanced qualities than any other profession whatever. Other powers are checked, and kept in order by republican elements, out of the clash of which a tolerable approximation to truth and justice is jostled. But the master is a despot, and on him alone depends whether his despotism is for good or evil. It is a very arduous task; enough to make anybody anxious and uncertain of his capacity for it.

"Still I think it possible for a very good and prudent, and earnest-minded man (let us say one man in ten thousand) to be a good schoolmaster; and depend upon it, it is a very noble ambition to be that man. The more so, as he may be one of the greatest and most useful men in his country, without being distressed by the stupid blockheads, whose voices make the noise of Fame, finding out that he is anything more than 'a very good schoolmaster—a most excellent man to trust with one's boys!'

"And this, I hope, will be the report I shall hear from some great blockhead, when I am determining to take up two or three of my little blockheads to Dr. B——, then head master of Eton; and as I hand you my envelope of ten pound notes (as if it was a letter of parental instructions), I shall refer you, for my wishes with regard to my children, to a conversation some five-and-twenty years ago in the gardens of Aranjuez. And my eldest little boy, as we come out of the door at the bottom of the tower, where we have been registering our names, will say,—

"'I think Dr. B—— looks rather a good old boy, Papa, but where is Arrang-hweth, Papa?'

"'Aranjuez, my son, is the Windsor of Spain, or rather the Versailles.'"

"'Was it built by Louis Quatorze, Papa?'"

We wandered about among the leafy avennes and glades while B—— told us amusing stories about life in Long Chamber, where all the collegers used formerly to live in a sort of prison republic; but it is now cut up into separate bedrooms, and glazed: in my time there were only iron gratings in the windows. There used to be fancy balls and theatricals, and masquerades and hot suppers, up in that Long Chamber, and there was a tradition that, in earlier times, an old sow had been carried up the narrow stairs, and kept on the roof till she littered and furnished roast pig for a month.

When we came to all the little pigs, it reminded us we were hungry, and we returned to our *restaurant*, inquiring, as we passed the palace gates, what time the Queen was likely to come out; but they said it was uncertain. So we dined, and returned to the gardens, and loitered about among the flowers and statues, till the gay *manta* of sunset was weaving in the western sky, and it was almost time to think of returning to Madrid.

Just as we were moving away, there was a trampling of horses in the distance, and the royal cortége of trundling carriages and trotting guards came by. We saw Her Catholic Majesty very tolerably as she passed. But our acquaintance was not to be so transitory. The whole line wheeled round in a semicircle, and drew up before a house in the great *plaza*, next the garden.

An old lady and a bald-headed gentleman came out on the balcony over the colonnade. These were the Queen Mother and Señor Muñoz. We drew near to see and hear what passed, and stood, with our hats off, under the colonnade, within three or four yards of the Queen's panel, while she talked over our heads to her relatives on the balcony.

She spoke in a clear, pleasant, natural voice, so that every word could be heard both by those above and below. The matter was entirely domestic: inquiring about Christina's children, who had the measles (which, by the way, accounted for this sort of visit, by the fear of the little princess of Asturias catching them); she related how her own baby had been, and took it from the gaily-dressed Asturian nurse, and held it up to be looked at,

As far as I remember, the presumptive heiress of all the Spains had slept rather badly the night before, and certainly seemed sleepy now. The Queen is a pretty-ish, ladylike woman, and looks about twenty-five. Her nose certainly is not a very choice feature, but not near so bad as those frightful snub-nosed caricatures on her coins would lead one to expect.

There was something singular in the perfectly easy, unembarrassed and unaffected manner in which she talked of her household interests before a gathering crowd of her subjects; as if she saw no reason why a queen should pretend to be more than a woman, or be ashamed of her maternal anxieties and filial duties. But kings and queens are accustomed to live in public, and I dare say she thought no more of the hundred and fifty people or so who surrounded her than if they had been half-a-dozen busts in her own bed-room.

So we went back to Madrid, on the whole not dissatisfied with our day, nor altogether sorry we had missed the Toledo diligence.

Next day we learnt by inquiries, made this time in person, that the diligence only went alternate days,

and would not go till the morrow. I passed the evening at the house of the Duque de R——, a poet, historian, and an agreeable man: formerly ambassador at Naples. He has some lively and pleasant daughters, and there was a good deal of cheerful conversation. There were only a friend or two besides the family. I went without invitation, having been made free of the house, and the Duquesa receiving every evening. I had made the Duque's acquaintance in Seville, when he asked me to come and see him as I passed Madrid. H—— preferred to stop at home and fiddle.

At last we got off to Toledo by the direct diligence. After six or seven hours of bleak, uninteresting country, we went up a steep hill, and under a great, Moorish gateway: and there we were. I am sorry to say that the expectations we had formed of Toledo were not realised. We immediately set about seeing what was to be seen; but the cathedral, which we began with, did not strike us much; it has neither much grace nor magnificence. What struck me most, were some large and rather brilliant frescoes along the arched walls of the cloister. They are, I believe, neither very antique nor very excellent in point of art; but the effect was peculiar

The view of the city from the tower was cold and stony, with but little beauty or irregularity of form in the hill on which it stands. B—— had to go back on the morrow early, and we determined to accompany him, instead of waiting two days more for the diligence's next trip. I think, perhaps, if it had not been for the sake of his agreeable society, we might have stayed, on the chance of Toledo's improving on further acquaintance. But this overbalanced our further curiosity; so, as I wanted to have a real Toledo blade for my court-sword, I made haste, and left them in the cathedral-tower, and hurried down to the *armeria*, which lies below the city, about a mile out, that I might get there before it closed.

It is a huge building, where the clash and clang of hammers and the roar of furnaces resound. It is a government-fabric, but there is a bureau where they keep samples for sale. I bought the lightest small-sword I could find, and a dagger for H——. As I was coming away I met H—— and B——. We went and sat by the banks of the Tagus, near a watermill.

The view of Toledo here, where the river sweeps round the foot of the long battlement-crowned hill, is picturesque; and H—— got out his sketch-book,

while we sat and extemporised little better than nonsense verses on the sunset, and the Tagus, and Toledo; and while I washed and rubbed the grimy handle of my blade (which had already considerably blackened my hand) in the water and sand of the river.

I.

It was the sunset hour—
On battlement and tower
Gleamed the red slanting rays:
High up Toledo, piled
In massive grandeur, smiled
Grimly, like some old warrior lit with battle's blaze.

II.

Upon the tawny sand,
A sword-blade in his hand,
A northern youth there knelt—
He plunged the weapon keen
In Tajo's ripples sheen:
"TAJADÓR, I do baptize thee, thou new glory of my belt!

III.

"Perchance, long hid beneath
Thy silver-clasped sheath,
Worn but for courtly show—
Who knows?—a day may dawn,
When in right earnest drawn,
Thy temper may be put to proof by parry and by blow!"

"Bravo, most valiant bard!" said B—— "and *Tajadór* (the cutter) would be a most excellent name for a sword baptised in the Tajo, if it only had a

trenchant edge; but this one, being a smallsword with no edge at all, gives me scruples."

"What of that? It has a point, and so has my joke; and if my joke's point don't make people laugh, my sword's point shall make them cry. Come, make me a good Latin pun, apropos of a Toledo blade, while I turn some English ones; for I will engrave it all over with epigrams, and make it the most comical blade in all Christendom." He took out a pencil and the back of a letter, and began to turn about his materials. In a minute or two he hit off this—

TIMETOLETVM,

which (I need scarcely tell so erudite a young lady) reads, either

TIME TOLETVM (honour Toledo), or
TIMETO LETVM (fear death).

Here are some of mine—merely general mottoes for a smallsword, without reference to Toledo, which I could make nothing of.

I.

THOUGH SLIGHT I AM, NO SLIGHT I STAND,
SAVING MY MASTER'S SLEIGHT OF HAND.

II.

'GAINST WORDS OR DEEDS MY WEARER MAY RESENT,
I'M A COOL, POLISHED, POINTED ARGUMENT.

III.

COME TO THE POINT—UNLESS YOU DO,
THE POINT WILL SHORTLY COME TO YOU.

IV.

IF THE HINTS WRITTEN ON MY BLADE,
THOUGH EYE OR EAR MAY NOT PERSUADE;
I TO YOUR *HEART* A WAY CAN FIND,
PERHAPS NOT SO MUCH TO YOUR *MIND*.

B—— also suggested, as a proper motto for the hilt, this Spanish one which Ford gives as used on some old Toledo blade:—

NO ME SAQUES SIN RAZON,
NO M' ENVAINES SIN HONOR.

(Do not draw me without reason—
Do not sheathe me without honour.)

Gayangos, the great Moorish antiquarian of Spain, who happened to call on me the day after our return, gave me this Cufic inscription:—

(I will slay thine enemy by the help of the Lord.)

We returned to Madrid early next morning without adventures, and have equally without

adventures passed three or four days since our return, chiefly in the picture galleries, on which I don't feel inclined at present, if ever, to enlarge. We have got tickets for a bull-fight to-morrow. In a few days we shall go to Cuenca. I don't think you can answer this in time to catch me at Madrid—try Burgos next if you favour me.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XX.

MADRID, *April* 29.

You were once pleased to observe, dearest critic, that my letters were generally the most amusing when they were about nothing at all. It would have been more complimentary to have put it, "When they were about nothing particular," for that is my favourite and most usual style: and indeed I now take up my pen to scribble you a line or two before we start for Cuenca, being precisely in the predicament of having nothing particular to say.

The first axiom of letter-writing is, "Put pen to paper and you may depend something will come of it." What a common and ridiculous excuse heads half the letters of one's dearest friends:—"I have been intending to write to you the last six months, but I had nothing particular to say." I always answer on such occasions, "Then why the deuce didn't you write and *say* nothing particular?"

It is a week since I wrote last; and I have got so much infected with a vicious habit of correspondence, that the desire of writing comes upon me independent of any plethoric secretion of epistolary elements.

I am drawn to my blotting-book as the best representative I can find in Madrid of your portals in Berkeley Square. While I write to you, I am in your society, as much as memory and imagination can patch up a counterfeit of reality. I fancy I hear your voice, answering the foolish things I write.

You seem to sit near me in that great old damask chair, whose ebony elbows are carved with lions' heads and claws, where you so often sit in the library after breakfast. I see the lights move on the rich, brown, wavy clusters of your hair, as you look up at me, with an incredulous smile lighting the delicate transparent features, to cross-question me whether I can really call up a fair familiar spirit, the double of yourself.

I see you very plainly (or let us say, very prettily) at this moment. I see the stained sunlight of the library's oriel flicker on the loose pleats of a longish-waisted dress, as you breathe. "Come, what colour

is my dress?" you say suddenly, thinking I shall not be able to tell, on the emergency, and so be exposed in a mild attempt at second sight. My dear madam, I have not studied your dresses with the same attention I have devoted to yourself: but your dress is grey, a lightish French grey, and it has a shiny look, like poplin, or something of that sort: but I am not learned in stuffs.

But suffice it to say I have a general and picturesque consciousness of your presence, which catches all the principal points distinctly, and leaves the rest undefined. For instance, I can see your châtelaine, and your pocket-handkerchief trimmed with Valenciennes, and I can plainly smell that there is eau-de-cologne among the cambric-folds. I assure you, I felt just now a distinct temporary scruple in lighting my cigarillo in your presence.

How is it in your case? When you are reading one of my letters for instance, do you imagine me talking in the genuine unmusical tones of my own voice—do you see me twirling impatiently round, like a Hindoo votary in torture, on the music-stool (which I have brought up near your chair,) when

you *think* some cruel and unkind remark? "It is just like one of your impertinent questions. Don't talk nonsense, but tell me something amusing, for example, something about your life in Madrid, now!"

But, of course, I prefer to talk nonsense. How much of my life in Madrid do you think I should tell you if I was sitting on the twirly music-stool at this moment, instead of where I am at the top of the Casa del Maragato, with my swealing candle only for company, for H—— has been in bed in the little room adjoining, some time, and the other candle lately burnt out.

It is past twelve. We came home at eleven from the Teatro del Principe, where we saw a comedy that would have amused you. It is called "*El Ingles y el Viscaino.*" The Biscayan is ruined, and contemplating suicide repairs to the river. When he is about to throw himself in, he finds he is observed by a melancholy man, in a drab great-coat with a cape, who he feels sure will have him fished out. He retires to wait till the coast is clear.

The melancholy drab man comes forward, and proves to be an English milord, who finding life a

bore, has determined to make an end of it. He contemplates his past life. "Here I am, a man with fifty thousand guineas of rent, in perfect health, possessing everything in fact which people who haven't got, wish for; and yet I am miserable.

"I have tried everything. I bought a ship and sailed round the world. I am tired of travelling. Once I tried sleeping twenty hours a day: but I got tired of my bed.

"There is nothing for it but drowning,—the only thing I have not yet tried. The famous *Shikkypeer* has written a noble soliloquy on suicide. Come, I will repeat it, *Ser, O no ser—eso es el Caso,** (a pause) there is an impediment to my finishing the soliloquy, for now I come to think of it, I never could remember more than the first line. I must drown myself, evidently, without repeating the soliloquy." He goes to the bank, and meets the Biscayan.

"What do you mean, sir, by spying upon my movements?"

"If you come to that, what do you mean by watching me?"

* "To be or not to be," &c.

"I am not watching you—I have business here?"

"So have I."

"How can that be; I am going to drown myself in the river?"

"So am I!"

"Singular coincidence! Why are you going to drown yourself?"

"I am a ruined man. I have lost everything—my name as a man of commercial honour will be stigmatised!"

"What an absurd reason! Why, I should think there must be something very exciting and novel in the feeling of being ruined?"

"Do not jest with me, sir! I am desperate."

"I am not jesting. Come, to show I am in earnest, let us go and drown ourselves in company?"

"But why do you drown yourself?"

"I find life an insufferable bore. I have tried everything except drowning and being ruined. I think it might interest me though, to hear your history before I die. Let me hear it!"

"It is very cold here for conversation. Come and sup at my house, and we will relate our histories, for I cannot consent to drown myself in your company,

until I am convinced you have just cause for so desperate an action."

They adjourn to the merchant's house. The Englishman falls in love with his daughter. They drink a few bottles of *rom*. The Englishman keeps perfectly steady and melancholy, while the Biscayan gets very drunk. The result of course is, that the milord is struck with the idea of liquidating the bankrupt's liabilities, finds benevolence a new and delightful sensation worth living for, marries the Biscayan's daughter, and the piece ends happily and dryly—at any rate not in the river.

The bull-fight I mentioned as in prospect, came off pretty well, but not brilliantly. The weather had been coldish, and the *ganado* were sulky and truculent, instead of being brisk and furious, which is the most favourable as well as safest phase of taurine humour. They showed a disposition to be wary and false, running at the men rather than the gaudy draperies flourished in their faces to draw them.

The audience were not in good humour, especially some *aficionados* near us, who seemed greatly to disapprove of the performance of one of the *picadores*.

There was a very savage beast in the arena, who had made terrible havoc among the horses; and this *picador*, who had been the most unfortunate, was manifestly disheartened, and seemed divided in his mind whether to be more afraid of the bull below, or the taunting remarks which rained upon his head from the indignant galleries.

His reputation was at stake, and I felt sorry for the poor fellow. He spurred his bleeding and disembowelled horse, and went to the charge apparently with an uncomfortable presentiment. The bull rushed at him with a tremendous impetus, which his lance was powerless to resist. The horns were plunged into the breast of the horse, who reared and fell backwards with his rider all of a heap. The *chulos* did not come readily enough to distract the bull's attention, and he trampled and gored his victim at leisure.

The wretches near us cried, "*Bravo toro—m'alegro.* It serves you right for pricking so badly." But when the *picador* was taken up senseless, with his face covered with blood, and carried round on a shutter, they, thinking he would probably die shortly, reconsidered the poor man's feelings a little, and

how unpleasant it must be to perish in the hour of his ill-success, in the midst of outcries and execrations on his want of skill and courage; so they changed their cries of *m'alegro* for "*Qua lastima!*" (what a pity), a mildish reparation under the circumstances.

The whole affair, from beginning to end, was infinitely more bloody and horrid than anything in the sample at Seville, which I remember describing with tolerable accuracy. It has quite satisfied us that bull-fights are not to our taste, and we never intend to go again. One of the bulls had a marked objection to fight, though he was strong and active, as plainly appeared by his jumping over the barrier (about six feet high) five times in rapid succession. However, when he found he could not get away, he fought bullfully.

There was another bull-fight yesterday, in which two men were killed. All Madrid is saying, "*Que lastima!*" about it to-day. They say the bulls are in a very exceptionally dangerous frame of mind this season.

I must go to bed, and end this letter, which you will think a very short and shabby one, though it

covers a closely written sheet of letter-paper. But the gigantic proportions of my ordinary paquets must have distended your capacities of letter-reading to an exorbitant pitch. What a sum they must cost you in postage: for here letters to England cannot be paid for. Your delicate foreign letter-paper sheets cost me about three shillings; but my revenge is something terrible to think of. If we come back alive from Cuenca you shall have a ponderous account of our expedition.

Ever, &c.

P.S.—As we have breakfasted earlier than we need have done, and the Cuenca diligence does not set off till noon, I have time to spare; so I have determined to cover my letter with another half-sheet, and write a postscript on it about Madrid.

It is a vaguish affair to have to squeeze a whole capital into a postscript, but I have no time to individualise, and a postscript on something in general will follow well enough after a letter about nothing particular.

Madrid is built in a roundish square, with a wall and boulevard squaring the circle. On the western

brow of the plateau is the palace which has some handsome rooms in it. We saw a very good copy of Murillos's best picture (in the Madrid gallery) hung in the palace, and thinking it might be a duplicate of the artist himself, learnt it was a copy by the queen.

Next door to the palace is the great armoury. Here we saw the swords and suits of many heroes, of high fame, and exquisite workmanship. It made me wish I had lived in those times, that I might have inlaid myself a suit of black steel with silver patterns of my own device. The Christian patterns showed a paucity of invention; but the Moorish were good in device, though I think not so graceful in form. The armour of Boabdil is very nicely inlaid. But what do you care about bosses and borders, and jewel-hilted rapiers? About as much as I do about bonnet-ribbons and *ruches* and mother-of-pearl-handled parasols!

Now we will skip, if you please, to the north-east corner of the city. Here is the famous *Prado*. *Prado* means meadow; and this pleasaunce is so called, because there is not an inch square of grass. It is all boscage, cut into ten thousand pieces by

gravel walks — making a pleasant labyrinth to wander and make love—with stone-seats. The broad walk up the centre is lined by immense numbers of the largish-sized kings and princes and queens, from Wamba and his lady downwards. There are reservoirs of muddyish water, and ducks and geese.

Returning, we cross the *Paseo,* a noble avenue where, as by the Serpentine—

> Smooth-trundling fashion courts, in cushioned ease,
> A dusty freshness from the evening breeze.

On the other side, crowning the slight rise of the fan-shaped *boca-calle* (street-mouth), of the Carrera San Hieronymo, stands the statue of Cervantes; which, though quite modern, is the thing which pleases me most in Madrid. Not because it is particularly good, but because the nation has attempted to do justice at last to her long-neglected son. On the pedestal is graven "AL PRINCIPE DE LOS INGENIOS ESPAÑOLES" (To the chiefest of the gifted men of Spain). I wish he could have seen it before he died. He must often have walked over the place. Ford's excellent joke, "To him whom his country refused bread

while living, they have at last given a stone," is unfortunately not exact. The statue is a bronze. His country by way of posthumous charity have presented him with a copper.

LETTER XXI.

CUENCA, *May* 1*st*.

Now for a little unadorned narrative again. We set off at twelve in the *banqueta* at the top of the diligence. After a tedious day of barren, uninteresting country, a still more tedious night came on. We luckily had it to ourselves, and tossing up for choice of places, disposed ourselves, H—— under-foot below the leather apron, and I along the seat.

The relative advantages were nearly balanced. H—— had more shelter from the wind. I had a hard leather seat instead of the bare foot-board to lie upon. It grew colder and colder. The wind whistled and howled in the cabriolet-head, whose leather curtains, as a matter of course, would not meet by full two feet.

I did something temporary with my silk pocket-handkerchief, tying it at the corners to stop the

gap. It sagged in like a bellying sail, and the cold air blew in through it, as if it was a sieve and only let the most rarified and piercing particles pass. H—— in a melancholy sleepy voice from below, said that it acted as a windsail, and turned the draught down below decks.

We were in our Madrid dresses, and had not brought our *capas* (mine, indeed, was in the neighbourhood of Jaen, but I might have brought my plaid), I can't think how we could have been so stupid; but at our outset there was a fine blazing noonday sun, and we thought our great coats would be enough.

"Oh Lord! methought, what pain it was to starve!" I was sleepy too, to add to my torments, and could not doze three minutes together without being awakened by the cold or the jolting. At last the day began to break, but the light made it no warmer; and even when the broad red sun slanted over the dark masses of Cuenca among the hills, he seemed powerless.

However, in half-an-hour or so his genial beams began to tell. The postilion, who had ridden all night, beginning to feel more comfortable, fell

asleep. These poor wretches, who have to ride three or four hundred miles on end without stoppage of more than two hours, would be badly off if they could not sleep a little in the saddle. This man would have to go all the way to Valencia. It is the same in Seville diligences, which have a still longer distance.

I had made this wonderful functionary's acquaintance (when we stopped at Tarancon) while he ate his beefsteak and smoked. He was a sinewy stolid youth, who seemed to possess no particular forte besides his long endurance in the saddle, and, indeed, such a course of life is enough to turn both body and soul into leather. I should have said (if I had only thought of it in time), that he was more tough than witty.

The near approach to Cuenca is pretty; a corner of the town rises on the rock-edge beyond a picturesque bridge. Crossing the river, we entered a long, broad street in the lower town, which is a common place enough. Here the diligence stops to breakfast at the *Parador de la Diligence*, and as Old Cuenca (the high town) is very imperfectly seen from this street, many people who only stop to breakfast

must go away with the impression that the place is nothing very remarkable. They only see the round end of the rock-perched city, where it fans out and sweeps down into the level. They see nothing, or at best only a passing glimpse of the least striking corner of those precipitous rock-walls crowned with quaint buildings, which overhang the deep ravines on either side. But of this and more anon.

At the moment we neither knew nor much cared about such things, but rushed into the Parador, where our first thought was to warm ourselves at a blazing cedar-log fire, whose ambrosial warmth soon tempered our principal grievance to a level where our second thought could thrust up its head. Of course the second thought was breakfast. The third thought was a cigar, in combination with a saunter in search of the picturesque.

We were in a more hopeful state of mind, now; in the sunshine, after a decent meal of poached eggs and chocolate; but still we felt prepared to be disappointed after coming 18 hours' journey merely to see it: however, we had not come so far without excellent testimonials to the meritorious features of the place. Stirling, before I left England, Gayangos

in Madrid, and Ford, in the Hand-book, were all eloquent in its praise, and their collective opinion on any *Cosa de España* is probably better worth having than that of any other three men living. Still Ronda stuck in our gizzard, for a disappointed tourist is suspicious of commended cities. I think the scalded dog in the proverb would hardly recognise himself in this genteel and somewhat diluted paraphrase.

A street at right angles to the one in which the Parador stands, whose houses were mostly in ruins, led us to the foot of the city. Instead of entering the gate at the bottom of the hill, we turned to the right up the narrow, deep ravine, over which the quaint, irregular crowd of narrow, many-storied buildings impend, as if they had been jostled and elbowed by the press to the very edge of the dizzy verge, and were propping themselves up, as a temporary but desperate shift, with jutting heels and stanchions of timber.

Along this deep cleft ripples the crystal Huecar, whose stream we ascended till we came to an obstruction of rocks near a water-mill. Managing to scramble over our difficulty, we proceeded along the winding ravine, while at every angle fresh views

broke upon us, and at each step we were more and more delighted and astonished with the ever-varying wonders of this truly enchanted city.

A little further on appeared the noble but dilapidated bridge 150 feet high, spanning the chasm of the Huecar. Of course the next thing was to get upon the bridge. The view of the chasm, on either hand, is very striking. The time-worn edges of the precipices have fallen into curious forms. Huge detached crag-heads stand out against the sky-line; the predominant type of these rocks bears some resemblance to the form of an anvil. Probably a Vulcanic formation. Here, on the bridge, we were arrested by a distant plaintive murmur of cathedral music from above; and we climbed into the town. After taking a glance at the Cathedral, and trying the Post Office in the faint hope of a letter, we descended by the steep, narrow street to our Parador.

It was now about twelve; but as we had begun the day on arriving at six in the morning, and besides had never satisfactorily finished our night, we thought something to eat and a *siesta* might suit our case better than further investigations for the present. H—— retired to his mattrass; and I,

thinking it would be pleasanter to sleep *al fresco*, resorted once more to the ravine.

It now became a matter of speculation where to find a warm sequestered place; which did not seem so easy as I had expected. At our first entry, about seven in the morning, the glen had been nearly a monopoly, but now the grassy banks of the Huecar were occupied by a promiscuous array of washer-women, kneading, and dipping, and clapping a great variety of tawdry rags.

I saw nothing for it but to climb the precipice to secure some inaccessible place of refuge; and about two hundred feet above the level of the stream I lighted on a little grassy ledge, before the mouth of a small cave. Here, by disposing my head towards the cave and my feet to the precipice, I could—

> "Sans souci du réveil,
> Dormir la tête à l'ombre et les pieds au soleil."

I lit a cigarillo with my burning-glass, and shortly went to sleep, while the distant music of the cathedral still murmured its plaintive lullaby.

Shall I tell you my dream? Methought (what would a dream be worth, if it did not begin with

methought?) as I lay in the mouth of the cavern, a distant trumpet's silver tones called to me from within. I rose and entered, leaving the light of day. Spellbound, without the power to stop and hesitate whether I should procced or return, I went down the steep declivity. The slope of the cavern's floor was rough and rocky, but my feet seemed lightened and guided by some onward destiny.

A strange, dim twilight grew upon the dark—a deep purple light, which as it increased, the mysterious impulse urging me forward seemed to strengthen, and I found myself plunging down from crag to crag at a desperate speed, leaping over great yawning gaps of apparently impossible width.

And yet I felt no fear—only a sort of dumb and dreamy wonder. I could see, as I flew across them, that beneath these abysses there flowed a dark torrent, breaking in foam that flashed phosphorically like the foam before the prow of a great ship plunging through a midnight sea; only that the thousand sparkles scattered from this black surge were as large and bright as Venus in her perigee.

It was their lustre which made the growing twilight of the cavern, which I could now see arched vaster than before, and made a larger, hollower echo to the roaring stream below. At length when I was beginning to feel weary and my heart was sinking, I came to a hopeless breadth of chasm, whose further verge rose perpendicular to the top of the cavern. The light of the whirling gulf below showed me, beneath its wall, an arch through which the tide was sucked with a dreadful gurgling tumult.

I could not pause. I cried, The end is come—now we shall see what lies behind the veil. I did not fear—a madness possessed alike my heels and brain. I sprang—a hissing plunge—a bubbling tumult of waters, and I felt myself washed like a feather through this infernal mill-race, expecting every moment (though with an unaccountable complacency) to have my head split on some jutting rock.

Before my breath was quite exhausted (for from habit I had filled my lungs before plunging in), I was rolled out into the bosom of a broad, calm river, where I could swim at leisure. It was

twilight still—but I was now beneath a broad, calm, starlit heaven—but it was not the same heaven, nor the stars I knew. It seemed as vast, but not transparent—a solid dome, in which greater stars were hung like lamps, for their beams were reflected as it were on a polished vault of lapis lazuli.

This great vault's rim, like that of an inverted bowl, seemed to rest on the brow of that lofty mountain-barrier, beneath whose precipitous wall the placid river wound, and from whose base spouted—through a round aperture, like a huge sewer-mouth—the sparkling torrent which had brought me down.

On the further side of the broad river, I saw a tall fountain of rosy fire, beneath what seemed a temple, whose great columns seemed to tremble as the flickering fountain rose and fell. I knew at once that this was my destination, and I swam towards the beacon, breaking the warm, dark waters into sparkling ripples, as I struck out lustily for the undiscovered shore.

The quality of the water seemed strange. It had an ambrosial perfume, unlike anything I have smelt

with waking nostrils: and so far from exhausting or chilling, it gave a sort of prickly, burning glow and vigour to the body. Indeed, my frame appeared to undergo a change as I swam. At last I reached the bank—a shore of shelving flowers, which seemed like violets set with a self-luminous dewdrop in the centre. In the midst of the perfume of these sweet flowers, I perceived a smell of burning.

Startled and rather alarmed, I found that all my clothes were in a smouldering state, smoking slightly, and dimly luminous. I hurriedly began to undress, but at the first touch the whole fell off like a husk of tinder; and I cast the consuming heap into the water, where it shot up a small, dull flame. This floated away in the languid current of the river, and soon disappeared.

I found I had been swimming in a kind of liquid fire, which luckily had the property of respecting flesh and blood. I lay down and rolled, like a horse relieved of his trappings, in the soft and fragrant crush of jewel-spangled flowers. A drowsiness fell upon me; I might have slept, when I was roused by the same trumpet call, not faint as before, but

ringing a shrill clear note that echoed up to the dark blue vault, and seemed to make the stars that hung there tremble.

I started, and wading up the slope knee-deep in flowers, and leaving a lustrous line where my footsteps had shaken the fiery dew, I soon reached the gate of the temple I had seen. It was like some of the great gateways you have seen in Layard's Nineveh, only on the two huge granite blocks on either side, couched living winged bulls with ghastly, solemn, human faces.

These rolled their large fiery eyes and fixed them on me; still I advanced, drawn towards the rosy fountain of flame which sprang from the black marble threshold, and shut the whole portal as with a broad curtain of fire.

As my feet touched the first step of the great black marble flight, both these beasts rose slowly and spread their wide wings across the entrance, and looking down upon me with a very sinister expression, spoke in an awful voice which sounded like the roaring of a mighty furnace. The one on the right hand said :

"MENE-MENE!"

And the one on the left hand—

"TEKEL UPHARSIN!"

The beasts were probably aware that the phrase they thus cut in two was all I should probably understand of the Assyrian tongue, and so made the most of it. I replied at once to the beast on the right hand:

"WAALEYCOM ESSALAM,"

And to the one on the left:

"BISMILLAHIRRAHMAN IRRAHIM;"

which pious and polite salutations seemed to strike them with a terrible horror, for a pang of torture twitched the solemn features, and they trembled violently, making a rustling sound with their quivering pinions like the rustling of a great palm tree when the simoom scours the desert.

Beneath these awful wings I stood and watched the flame. It sunk a little and left a space of darkness at the top of the door-way, in which the sparks hovered like stars in the mirror of a flowing river. These star-like sparks were gathered like wild geese

in the sky, and fell into the form of successive characters one after another.

א
ר
ח
ל

When it came to the *Lamed* no more letters were formed, and the flame rose to the top of the doorway again. I was aware that the word which had been spelt means ENTER in the Chaldaic.

It seemed a dangerous enterprise to go into this flaming fiery furnace, but I remembered the quality of the water, and had an impression that I was someway seasoned against burning; moreover the trumpet sounded again behind the veil, and in I dashed, not without a vague suspicion that I might be converting myself into a dish of broiled bones to make a meal for some winged-lion fiend inside.

I got safe through however without a hair of my head being singed, and found myself in a vast circular court, crystal-floored and surrounded by a lofty peristyle of gleaming golden columns. In the centre a great fountain cast up a glowing volume of what seemed like molten silver.

Below was a broad golden basin, sunk in the floor, in which the falling fluid tumbled and seethed as molten silver does in the primrose heat of a crucible. Before the fountain, on an ebon throne, sat a swarthy giant with dark folded wings; he was crowned and zoned with gold, and in his hand he held a golden trumpet, which, as I entered, he raised to his lips; but just as I was preparing to be effectually deafened I heard a gentle dreamy voice from behind the fountain call my name.

I passed the giant's throne, and going round the fountain saw that in a channel flowing from the central basin, a shadowy shallop rocked upon the glowing stream.

It was not moored, and would have drifted away through an arch opposite my entrance, but on its prow there stood a dark maiden with a silver paddle with which she kept its head against the current. Her eyelids drooped, her form was beautiful, but black as night, and blacker still than night the flowing hair contrasted with the loosely flowing robe of snowy white; and robe and hair floated around her listless arms, she stooping down upon her weary toil.

She said, nor raised her eyes, "I wait for thee. Come!" And I entered and sat down, and she sat down beside me; and said, "I am weary," and threw her languid arms around me, and pillowed her drowsy head upon my shoulder, and clothed me with her wealth of raven tresses.

Meanwhile our boat sprang forward through the arch—away—down the rapid stream of fire.

But where we came to at last and what we saw by the way I will not relate, at least for the present, for fear of being tedious; for I am tired of relating my dream, and there is a hopeless quantity more of it, enough, indeed, if I told it now, to smother the whole description of Cuenca and its environs.

Therefore, with your permission, I shall abruptly wake at once; but if you are interested to know the sequel, in which yourself by the way appears by visionary proxy in Pandemonium, I shall have great pleasure in finishing it off for you at some dull place where there is nothing to describe.

On getting up, and shaking my clothes and faculties into their proper places, I found my seclusion had not been so perfect as I supposed. A knot of soldiers had gathered on a path-ledge on the opposite side of

the glen (which, though so deep, was only about fifty or sixty yards across), who seemed to be pointing me out and observing on my motions, as if they considered me some troglodyte animal, in a grey frieze coat, who had crept out of the caverns to bask in the sunshine.

I now descended from my rocky perch, and retracing my steps to where the Huecar debouches from its chasm, crossed the foot of the town, and wandered up the Jucar glen at the other side. This is as abrupt and striking as the former, but a thought wider, and watered by a much more copious stream: at first a deep dark-green mirror reflecting the crag-perched city which overhangs it, but higher up it boils and whirls among protruding rocks and in deep pools.

I followed the margin of the stream, a charming wooded walk beneath the precipice opposite the town; crossed at the wooden bridge, and still kept on following the other bank under the impression that some path would shortly occur to lead me back to the town. I found none, and came to the conclusion that the two glens must meet further up, and so went along still as far as that idea would support my

patience. When I had come nearly to some gardens beneath the cliff, and perceived that the glen turned rather the wrong way, as the day was now hot and nobody in sight, I undressed, and bathed in a clear whirling pool.

Being now refreshed and cool, it struck me that it would be a humiliating alternative to turn back. I therefore adopted the imprudent, but exciting course, of scaling the precipice directly opposite the spot which I had accidentally come to. It looked very pretty climbing, but on experiment I found it hard enough to make a start up the first perpendicular twenty or thirty feet, which was so ticklish work that it effectually cut off my retreat; for, as one has not any eyes in one's heels, it is much more difficult to climb down than up. I therefore, as in prudence bound, now launched in my difficulty, crawled slowly and carefully up a wrinkle in the rock's face.

It was all so hazardous for three hundred feet or so, that the slightest slip would have rolled me away to perdition. I began to be seriously alarmed, for I felt sure that if I came to actual impossibilities further up, I should very improbably be able to get down again alive. I was especially afraid of a great

tuft of brambles which blocked up my wrinkle, and was very hard to get over. My footing was not improved in safety by my having on an old pair of dress-boots which had danced through a season on the polished floors of the metropolis, and were very slippery-soled. But it is no use to try to make one's own dangers exciting in the narration. Like all other narrators of hair-breadth escapes, I got to the top, the reaching of which, I assure you, caused me a very pleasurable sensation.

There certainly is a luxury in danger. The mind enjoys excitement too much to be particular as to whether the excitement is for the moment pleasurable or painful. I certainly don't think it is a pleasant sensation to be afraid, and yet I know by experience, that since the time when I could walk across a gate, whether there was anybody to look or not, it has always been a sort of instinct with me to do those things which engender fear.

The suspense, while you are in the scrape, is perhaps about evenly balanced by the consciousness of skill which wrestles with the difficulty; but when one is fairly through, one congratulates one's-self so cordially, and common earth seems such a luxury to

one's feet; besides a certain rebellious triumph over the detracting whisper of Prudence, who certainly has the best of the argument, when to Rashness making the boast, "I have done it!" she answers—"Yes! but you had no business to try."

But how very flat the world would be if one only did what one has any business to do. I never had such a climb since a pleasant precipice at Niagara, nine years ago, when I was seventeen, and had very near as much of the better part of valour as at present.

Now that I was at the top, I sat down on the edge of a broad mass of rock overhanging the precipice, which fell away about 200 feet in a plumb-line. Between this and another similar rock-head was the fissure, whose irregularities of surface had been the rounds of my ladder. Below lay huge lumps, forty or fifty feet square, which had fallen off the brow in ages past.

In the narrow glen below, the edges of the precipice on either side had formed the horizon: but from the height to which I had climbed, I now saw that from the brow above the abrupt crags, sloped back a considerable forehead of rugged moun-

tain, sprinkled with great boulder-stones, many of which had apparently rolled down to the very verge, and been hesitating for centuries whether to go over or not. The foamy Jucar roaring through its rocks 500 feet below me, made a pleasant solemn murmur in the still windless abyss, which began to darken down below, as the sun declined towards the mountain flank.

When the blood is heated, and the mind excited by climbing, you enjoy the beauties of scenery much more than when a steam-boat or a diligence carries you lazily by.

After I had made the most of these sensations and reflections, and taken my breath, with a slight admixture of tobacco-smoke, I crossed the narrow neck of the rock isthmus, and looked back upon the city, and down upon the Huecar glen, from a brow of the precipice, which we had seen from the bridge. We had remarked the spot from the appearance of something like a ruined building in the face of the rock, though in the distance we could not assure ourselves that it was not one of the fantastic natural formations in which these very singular crags abound. It turned out to be the front wall of the

lower story of a house built down a chip in the edge of the cliff, which tenement having probably tottered on the brink to an extreme old age, had at length fallen over.

Returning to the Parador, I found H—— had returned from making a sketch in the Huecar glen, of which I will endeavour a humble pen-and-ink copy for my initial letter. I always rule off the oblong corner of my first page, and leave it blank till before the end of the letter some worthy subject of illustration occurs.

While he was sketching, a man had come up and entered into conversation with him about the picturesque, who said that Cuenca was nothing compared with another place in the hills, about three leagues off, called *Las Piedras Encantadas* (the enchanted stones). The name struck our fancy, and we resolved to go, being not at all discouraged by the dissuasion of a man at the Parador, who said it was a bad place—*nada digna de ver se* (nothing worth seeing)—only rocks and pine-trees.

The director of the diligence, a polite *caballero*, whose bureau is in the Parador, and who fraternised with us at breakfast, informed us that Piedras

Encantadas was a nice place in a *paisaye muy lindo* (pretty scenery), also that there were good shooting and fishing. Our best way, he said, would be to find some of the *Val de Cabras* people who come down daily with loads of fire-wood, and they would take us back for a trifle on their discharged mules. We dined, and went to bed early in consideration of our last night's want of sleep in the diligence.

Next morning, after breakfast, we went out, accompanied by the polite diligence-director. In the market-place of the high town he stopped two sturdy damsels, browned and blowzed as to their complexions, with dark flowing tresses and sparkling eyes. These maidens were leading a long string of mules and asses charged with faggots. They agreed to call for us at two o'clock, and carry us back to Val de Cabras.

In the meantime we continued our walk. Passing through the gate of the ruined fortress which guards the narrow neck of the rock plateau, and forms the upper entrance into Cuenca, we turned to the left, and found a winding path which led us down into the glen of the Jucar. Here we bathed, and on our return at two o'clock found the damsels with

their *caballerias* waiting in the court of the Parador.

We entreated them in vain to allow us to give them something to drink. They had three mules and a donkey tied in a string. I mounted the first, and H—— the second. The tallest and comeliest of our *arrieras* took the halter of mine—the other brought up the rear with a switch to encourage loiterers to keep up their pace. In this peculiar sort of procession we passed along the great street, emerged from the town where we first entered it in the diligence, turned down below the arches of the bridge, and followed the banks of Jucar.

When we had got some little way beyond our bathing-place of the morning, and a bend in the ravine had shut out the last of the towering heights of Cuenca, our young ladies thought fit to dissolve the tie which bound us, and we were permitted to direct and manage our several animals as best we could, by admonitory flicks over the head and ears with our halter ends. Thus we threaded our way, riding two and two (for our fair guides had also mounted), along the narrow path, winding in and out among the huge masses of fallen rocks

between the echoing precipice and the murmuring river.

I, of course, adhered to my original conductress. Some introductory conversation ensued. Her name was Facunda—the other was not her sister, but her cousin—she was called Casta. They did not live in the same house, Casta lived over the way. Casta's house was a posada—not a regular posada, but guests could be received. She was not married—nor would confess a *novio*. She had not yet been told her eyes were beautiful—nor was altogether prepared to believe it now.

We overtook other travellers, and our cavalcade soon amounted to about forty animals—horses, mules, and asses, mostly mounted by young women and little girls. There were, however, two old women, a man, and two boys. The party reached these final dimensions when, about a league from Cuenca, the glen widened out into a fair green valley. Here the driving of those beasts which were not mounted caused some diversion, and some of the young ladies fell off now and then in the pursuit of pervicacious donkeys who diverged into the green barley.

It was a merry party, and we rode promiscuously

among them, saying all the fine things we could make intelligible, and indeed more; for their language was a rough country dialect, and they could not keep up with our florid classical style of complimentary dialogue, which was principally modelled on Don Quixote's conversations with princesses and shepherdesses. Nevertheless, they took it all as a compliment, and laughed as much as if they understood all our best jokes and sublimest metaphors.

There was none of the party who, in my eyes, eclipsed the charms of my original Facunda, but H——, I am sorry to say, proved faithless to his Casta, who being mounted on a slow donkey rather lagged behind; but I did not see that he bettered himself greatly—and indeed, to say the truth, any three of the whole party might have sat for the portraits of those *feas aldeanas* whom Sancho persuaded his master to believe beauteous princesses.

The road now turned to the right, and leaving the broad valley of the Jucar entered a narrow, picturesque defile, watered by a smaller tributary stream. Great pines, which had planted themselves in the clefts and ledges of its rocky walls, waved their dark arms overhead, and here and there the

surrounding mountains lifted their lofty eaves into our narrow-bounded horizon.

The ravine widened, and along the expanding valley we caught a glimpse of Val de Cabras through the pines. Our party's spirits rose higher and higher as they approached their hearths and *ollas;* and the motley rout amid much clatter of tongues, and laughter, and snatches of songs, entered the little village about sunset.

Casta had assured us that her house was amply provided with all things, but we knew the specious *hay de todo* too well, and insisted on the maiden's taking a dishful of cold mutton-chops from the Parador. These they had wrapped in some rag and stowed in their alforjas, and they came in well at our supper; for the house only possessed eggs and salad, though there were immense quantities of handsome pots and pans hanging in burnished array round the kitchen.

Our hostess was obliging and unsophisticated, but garrulous to an extent that impeded the supper.

"So you are countrymen of Don Roberto. Don Roberto dwelt here for some weeks. Probably these gentlemen have been recommended to our house by

Don Roberto. Señores, are you acquainted with Don Roberto?"

"Carajo! *Señora huèspeda, quien sabe* (who knows)? Will you please to be quick with the salaù? There are at least five hundred thousand Don Robertos in England *uno mas inconociḍo que otro,* and unless you know his other name, *como se puede averiguar.*"

"His worship's *apellido* was *Duendas* — was it not, Pedrillo?" (referring to her nephew, who sat smoking in the corner,) "Pedrillo, gentlemen, guided his worship about the country, and who knows but he would have taken Pedrillo back to England, only Pedrillo would not leave his *novia.*"

"Yes, he was called Don Roberto Duendas de Monroy, and I used to go with him to fish and shoot. Don Roberto was *muy aficionado a la caza* (a great sportsman), and carried an escopet of the richest, with two strokes."

"Don Roberto was *buen mozo* (a handsome youth)," continued the landlady, "*muy guapo y liberal;* we all loved him, and were sorry when he went away; and we love all Englishmen for his sake."

"If you love *us,* don't talk so much, most affable

of hostesses, but use your endeavours to bring the supper to a head, for, *mira Vmd.* (look you), while your tongue is dancing our teeth are standing still."

"*Cachaza, hijo* (patience, my son); *pierda Vmd. cuidado* (may your worship be relieved of solicitude.)" And then she would return to her chattering about Don Roberto.

During the interval before supper was ready the fair Facunda paid us a visit, and said that she hoped we should be comfortable, and that her house was at our disposition whenever it pleased us to honour it. I said I would do myself the honour of paying her an evening visit after supper. She sat there knitting a stocking, and, by way of diversion, I knitted a few rounds, which created a proper degree of astonishment. When she departed I told stories to the children about little boys lost in the mountains, and distressed by lions and tigers and wild bulls, and rescued by fairies in winged cars drawn by *media docena mariposas;* but at last the supper was ready. We ate ravenously, and immediately after became very sleepy over our pipes. H—— judiciously went to bed at once; but I, with a lingering intention of going to pay my visit over

the way, if I could wake up enough at any future period, dozed in the chimney-corner till it was too late, and then waking up, wrote my journal and went to bed.

Next morning, Sunday, we had arranged to ride up to the *Piedras encantadas*, a league up among the hills; but after breakfast, while the mules were being caught, which caused an unforeseen delay, I went and made a morning call over the way.

The beauteous Facunda was dressed for mass, and was coifing her little sisters for the same occasion. It was an irregular, dark interior, with nooks and chimney-corners something like a highland bothy, only larger. In one corner of the chimney lay an old bedridden grandsire, to whom I presented a cigar. After a while Casta came to say the mules were ready, and we set off, accompanied by the old *posadero* and Facunda's father.

Riding along the valley we came to a zigzag path, by which we ascended the mountain. Facunda's father attended me. He was a striking, picturesque-looking man, with long black hair curling down to his shoulders. A broad and nobly-cut brow, valanced with shaggy eyebrows, overhung serious, deep-set

eyes. He was dressed in black sheepskin. Altogether his appearance was calculated to produce a sensation on the Adelphi boards in the character of an unfortunate monarch in the disguise of a shepherd.

I naturally supposed he would be a character of some sort, and took pains to beat about for original sayings and local traditions; but I could get nothing out of him. He was not sulky, but simply dull, and afforded one more confirmation to the axiom, that "appearances are often deceitful."

Finding I could elicit nothing, out of benevolence to future travellers who might make the same inquiries, I thought fit to lay the foundations of a tradition myself. So I told him that the *Piedras encantadus* were mentioned in an ancient manuscript, *Las Cronicas de los Reges Moros*, written in the Arabic language by *el sabio* Abou-kizeb.

By this account it appeared, that a certain sultan, called Fâseq el Mesquin, reigned very wickedly over a tract of country from Catalayud to Albacete, and from Tuejar to Guadalajara.

This malignant potentate was favoured and abetted in his cruelty and crimes by certain evil spirits called *chinnes* and *âfritos*, who constructed for

him a magnificent city of palaces and towers, and *alcazares*, with prisons and deep dark dungeons underground, where he kept many of his oppressed subjects in great torture and anguish. He had many wives and an immense miscellaneous seraglio. One of his favourite slaves was a captive Christian lady, the daughter of a knight in Burgos and affianced to a *caballero muy principal* of Valencia.

On her journey thither she had been taken. From her virtues and prudence she soon acquired a considerable influence over Fâseq. So much so, that his principal astrologer and ambassador at the court of the powers of darkness grew jealous of her, and began to entertain serious fears that she might convert the wicked old man in his dotage to become a Christian. What the astrologer cared for more than this, was the danger that her son Cuencon el Sâlahyn might be named successor to the sultanic divan.

Cuencon was the favourite son of the old king, and it was strongly suspected that his mother, the Christian lady (called Abiadah by the Moors, though her real name was Blanca), had made him a Christian already. Indeed it is now ascertained that she

prayed daily during her pregnancy to the blessed Virgin that no pagan might be born of her.

Cuencon was in every respect the reverse of his father, but the old man was proud of him, for he was the best horseman in the realm, and could throw a spear more than three hundred varas (so says the historian, whose statement, however, I can scarcely credit), besides which, he was so gentle and amiable, by the peculiar favour of the Virgin, that those who saw him could not help loving him.

The chief astrologer, dreading the ascendancy of the young prince, caused an *áfrito* to appear to the king in a bloody dream, holding a sword in one hand, and a golden bowl of clotted blood in the other. He thus addressed the terrified old *pecador* in awful accents:—

"Choose, oh King! Here is thy sword to slay. Here is thine own gore to spill. Treachery lurks within thy doors; and the son of thy bosom whom thou least suspectest, goeth about to slay thee. I may not tell thee his name. But be warned—farewell."

The cunning astrologer, Arif el Cauâqueb, had

justly calculated on the cruel disposition of king Fâseq. He, without more a-do, not knowing which of his sons might be the culprit, slew them all. But the Virgin, who had not been idle during these diabolical transactions, sent a messenger to Abiadah, in a dream simultaneous with the king's, warning her to fly with her son, which she accordingly did before daybreak; and fled to a cave in the rocks between the Jucar and the Huecar, which were then bare and solitary, without any habitation of man.

The king with his astrologer was preparing to search the whole region, when the vengeance of heaven overtook them. It rained a shower of flame on the wicked city, which smelted the very stones together, sealing up Fâseq and Arif with all their infamous company of evil spirits in the molten ruins. But yet it is said that one may trace the lines of the streets running between great masses of crumbling rock which seem to have been blocks of building.

As to Cuencon and his mother, after this catastrophe, they gathered their subjects together and built the city of Cuenca on the rock beneath which they had taken shelter in their flight.

"I never yet heard this history," said my com-

panion, "and it seems indeed too strange to be credible; but in some points it is verisimilar, for the lines of the streets may yet be traced, and it is sometimes called the *Ciudad encantada*, from its resemblance to the form of a city."

About half way up the zigzag path, by which we were ascending the mountain, there was a huge block of stone which had fallen from the impending cliff. It was something like the size and shape of a great whale, about 60 feet long and 25 high in the round of its back. We inquired about it, and the old *posadero* said that it was called the *piedra de las almas*, because it had fallen at the vesper time of *las almas*.

It fell in the year 1797, and he remembered the tremendous noise it made in the glen. He was a lad at the time and was out with his father cutting wood.

On the top of the hill there was a large pine forest, among which, here and there, great rocks began to appear. At length we reached an open space, beyond which stood several heavy-headed stones about thirty feet high, set upon narrow necks and looking something like clumsy columns. Our

guides told us this was the beginning of the enchanted city. We shortly entered it.

It is composed of long ranges of generally perpendicular rock, thirty or forty feet high, between which are narrow lanes of green closely cropped sward. Sheep and shepherds are the city's only inhabitants. Here and there the lanes narrowed, and the leaning walls joined over-head like a rude gateway. Here and there, too, were heavy-headed projections from the walls, which bore some remote resemblance to clumsy Egyptian pilasters.

Still, after hunting up and down the grassy streets of the labyrinth for a specious point of view, I found nothing which could pass, when drawn, for a street view, in even the most ante-Cheopsean style of architecture. In hopes of a more extensive view of the city, and being moreover stimulated by H——'s surmising that it could not be done, I climbed one of the rock walls, which being of a honey-combed, sponge-like surface, afforded good hand and foot hold, though at the outset it leaned over a little, which gave the experiment a certain air of difficulty. The view was not much.

The tops are mostly of the same level, and the

prospect was varied only by occasional pines and cedars lifting their heads above the alleys.

On coming down I attempted a sketch; but it proved difficult to do; and if I copied it in pen and ink would, I fear, give you so imperfect an idea, that I think perhaps I had better leave it to your imagination, which cannot fail, with the few slight materials I have given, to picture something striking.

It would be an admirable place for pic-nics, and the cool, shady lanes seem made for loving loiterers to lose their way among, when pigeon pie and champagne have a little obfuscated their notions of locality.

Emerging from the city, we met in the piny suburbs a venerable shepherd with flowing silver hair. His hut was near at hand, and as we were hungry, he gave us to eat of a sort of cake resembling the broad bakstones of Yorkshire. We in return presented him with *cigarillos*.

We wanted to know what time it was, and after a careful observation of the sun's altitude, he assured us with much confidence it was half-past eleven. "*Pues el cielo es su reloj, muy cuerdo tiene Vmd. su*

relojero, que no se engañen horoscopos de su hechara." *

On our return to Val de Cabras, we dined magnificently on a roasted kid, and a kind of fritters, made of crumbs moulded in little lumps with egg and sugar, fried in oil, and served with wine sauce. They were very good — better than our English sample of Spanish fritters. After dinner, Don Roberto's guide conducted us home to Cuenca that he might bring back our mules. On our way we bathed in the Jucar where it enters the gorge, and arrived about sunset.

Next day we returned to Madrid in the interior of the diligence, which was nearly as much too hot as the *banqueta* was too cold. But heat is the better fault of the two. One of our companions was a gay and voluble young Murcian, coming to Madrid to show his lately married wife the wonders of La Corte. He told us many amusing stories; among others a history of his being robbed, which, as we have not been robbed ourselves, I will give you as a sample.

"*Pues Señores*, the casualty was in this manner.

* Since the heaven is your dial your worship has an excellent clockmaker; for timepieces of his workmanship are never out of order.

We were a party of three. Our journey was towards Caravaca. One of my companions was the old *capataz* of a friend of mine. He was bringing up the rents of a small estate in the vicinity of Moratalla. We had one rusty old escopet, but it was not loaded. But, to say the truth, we had no idea of being robbed. *Salta la liebre de donde menos se aspetaba,* (the hare starts where she is least expected), and as we had just passed the river Segura, they leapt out of the bushes, and pounced upon us unawares.

"They were seven, all armed with muskets. We were only three. One an old man, myself a lad of seventeen, and the other a servant. There was no time for flight or resistance. "*Abajo!*" they cried, and down we went, with our noses on the road. They rifled us of all we had worth taking, even to the *marselles* jacket I wore. Indeed it was *algo vistoso* (rather smart) and had massive silver *broches* on it.

"After they had robbed us, they bound us hand and foot, and carried us into the bush. Here they threw us down, and held a consultation whether to kill us or not. I don't know whether it was to frighten us and make us quiet, but one of them

seemed very anxious to despatch us at once. *En resolucion,* they determined to leave three men to watch us there till night. The other four decamped with our horses and the plunder. They were afraid to leave us though we were tied so tight, for fear some one might come along the road, and hearing our cries come to the rescue. It was ten o'clock in the morning when we were attacked, and all through that long sultry summer day, they sat and watched us. Several times we heard passers by within twenty yards of us; but they would have stabbed us at once if we had cried out. The cords cut my wrists painfully, and I was dying of thirst.

"I begged and prayed the man on guard over me to loosen my wrists a little, but he refused. I entreated him, in the name of Christ, to get me a drink of water, for the river was not fifty yards off. He said, if I was not quiet he would make an end of me.

"'At any rate, for the sake of the blessed Virgin, let me smoke something?' On this last piteous request the robber's heart relented, and he said,

"'*Quiere Vmd. puro u papel?*' (will you have a cigar, or a *cigarillo*?)

"'*Tan a seca boca puro no se puede fumar*,' I replied, and he set about making me a few *papeles*. Soon after sunset they left us. The servant at last got one hand loose, but his navaja was in the left pocket of his *calzones*, so that he could not get at it. I told him to roll towards me if he could, and he would be able to get at mine, which he accordingly did, and opening it with his teeth cut us all clear of our bonds.

"The old factor was the worst off; he had hurt his face on some root or stump, when they threw him down; his head had got in a hole, and his legs were lying uphill, so that when we took him up he was speechless, and we thought he would have died. The robbers, doubtless, had private information. They got six hundred dollars by the day's work, besides our horses, and my *marsellés*, and about a dozen dollars from me.

"But were the robbers never caught?" we enquired.

"Oh, no! One of them I myself recognised by his voice, though I took good care not to let him see I did, or he would have made away with me on the spot."

"And did you not inform against him afterwards?"

"No! I thought it better not; for it would have been difficult to prove, and he was a very desperate character, who would have killed me as soon as a fat capon, if he had borne a grudge against me. Besides I had not lost much—perhaps fifty dollars worth altogether. It was not worth while to make a fuss about it, and run into danger."

"But, my dear sir, your friend's rents! the cause of public security!" &c., &c., in a long discourse on the deplorable moral result of an acquiescence in such disorders. It had not struck him in that light, so there was no more to be said.

We reached Madrid to-day at six in the morning, and went to bed at once by broad daylight. We got up and breakfasted at two. It is now night. Farewell: the time of my return is drawing on.

LETTER XXII.

SEGOVIA, *May* 9.

ON our way to London we determined to take the Escorial. Leaving Madrid, therefore, by the first gate we could find (that at the end of the Calle de Alcala, Madrid's Piccadilly), we turned to the left and skirted the city-walls, till we reached the pleasant avenues which line the margin of Manzanares.

Passing under a lofty triumphal arch we bad farewell to the precincts of La Corte, and crossed the river by a bridge adorned with a few broken-nosed stone statues. Three or four hours' ride across a bare, bleak, undulating plain carried us out of sight of Madrid, which, being a city set on a hill, takes some little hiding, and looks well in the distance.

Turning the ridge of a low, dark range of hills, the huge grey masses and lofty spires of the Escorial appeared at the foot of its snow-sprinkled mountains on the other side of a broad, flat, wooded valley.

From its great size it seemed nearer than it was, and the night fell before we reached the small town which has grown up in its vicinity.

The Fonda of Callisto Burgilios is a comfortable house, and there were stewed pigeons in the *olla*. We supped in the kitchen. Don Callisto, our host, judging I suppose from our soiled and seedy *arriero* costume, that we were hawkers of some sort, asked us what we had to sell in the alforjas.

We disabused him of his error, telling him our usual story that we were poor portrait-painters. But it struck me that it would be a good idea to keep up the impression of our being ignorant tramping vagabonds (which a less indulgent critic than my Mabel might suggest was not far from being a tolerably accurate one) by way of getting a few rises out of him, for he seemed an affable and jocose personage.

"*Entrando en el pueblo vimos un tal desaforado edeficio, que parece iglesia grandemente desigual conforme es pequeño el lugar. Pero quiza sera convento u fabrica. Siempre mas se parece a un convento.*" (Entering the place we saw a whacking great building, which seems far too big a church for so small a town. But

perhaps it is a convent, or a manufactory. However it looks more like a convent than anything else.)

"*Carajo, señores,*" he replied; "can it be possible that there is any one who has not heard of the Escorial, the eighth wonder of the world; if, indeed, it be not the first, and before all the other seven. The Escorial, which people come to see from the ends of the earth, *Caramba!*"

"And pray what may Escorial mean, I have not before heard the word?"

"He who says *Escorial* says all; for there is more than a little of everything in it. Palace—church—[illegible]—pulchre. Philip the Prudent vowed it [illegible] of St. Quentin (where he conquered the [illegible] and built it to be the pious retreat of his [illegible] and a tomb more stupendous than the [illegible] which are in Egypt, señores) for the bones of Catholic kings."

"If this be the case, we had perhaps better delay our journey towards Segovia a few hours to-morrow morning, and take a look at this Escorial, *que segun dice Vmd. debe ser cosa muy linda, y digna de verse.*"

"I have had the honour of receiving many distinguished guests, who have come from distant countries

to visit the Escorial. The celebrated *Doomas* was here, and spoke *muy amistosamente* with me in this very kitchen. There was a large party with him. They insisted on cooking several dishes for themselves. They drank a considerable quantity of wine and were very lively. Afterwards they must needs get up a ball, and Doomas danced with my eldest daughter."

Next morning at breakfast a sound of shuffling steps, accompanied by frequent tappings of a staff along the passage, heralded the appearance of Cornelio, the celebrated blind guide of the Escorial. He seems to be about sixty, and has a mild, fat, vacant, uplifted, listening face. He seemed to consider it a matter of course that we should employ him, and so we did.

The tappings of his staff on the flag-stones soon awoke the echoes of a huge cloistered court, and a functionary appeared who conducted us by a back entrance up into the palace department of the edifice. Here the first thing which struck us was a quantity of the most brilliant-coloured tapestry we had ever seen. Indeed, most of the rooms are covered with it,—scenes from the chase, the battle-field, and bull-ring.

One suite of apartments was illustrated with the adventures of Telemachus, as our usher informed us. After hearing a great deal about this worthy Ithacan, we thought on the strength of our costume we might ask for an historical commentary, so I said—

"*Pues quien era este Telemaco? parece que fuese caballero muy principal en su tiempo; es regular que era Español.*" (After all who was this Telemachus? it seems he was a very considerable person in his day; probably he was a Spaniard.)

"*... hombre, era Frances.*" ("My dear sir"—in ... expostulatory surprise at such an error—... Frenchman.")

Happening to see three small Wedgewood porcelain busts of familiar faces on the chimney-piece, we inquired who they were?

"*Tres filosofos Ingleses.*" (Three English philosophers.) "This," he said, pointing to Pope, "is 'the famous Chiquiper; this," pointing to Johnson, 'is the wise Poppy, and this," laying his hand on Shakespeare's round forehead, "is the prudent Honsoon."

There was one set of rooms prettily decorated

in marqueterie wainscot, by CARLOS IV., who himself worked at it. A cypher of his name is shown as the royal handiwork. All the door-handles and hardware fittings were of elaborate cut steel, inlaid with gold.

Philip II.'s bedroom—a dark, cold, uncomfortable cell as need be—is only separated by a glass door from the vast and lofty church. We were made to sit down in its ante-chamber, on a straight-backed arm-chair and backless stool; and when thus seated opposite each other, were informed that here and thus sat Philip and his prime minister Olivarez. We were not so much affected by our unforeseen position as our conductor seemed to expect, only remarking, that if Philip and Olivarez had been informed that we were about to fill their places, they would probably have been more astonished and ashamed, than we were proud and delighted.

We now descended into the *sacristia,* where our blind man met us again. Also a fat young man, and the *sacristano,* who conducted us all down into the *Panteon,* by a dark flight of steps, plunging into the entrails of the earth. The vault was not

to be entered, the gates being closed during the lying-in-state of the little Prince of Asturias.

The *sacristano* lighted a line of candles, just within the gilded bars, which dimly lighted up this somewhat tawdry sepulchre. The poor little pocket-edition of Catholic Majesty, bound in crimson velvet and gold, suppressed so soon after publication, with the hot-pressed leaves of his kingly destiny uncut, lay on an altar-table in the middle of the vault, and afforded a topic of moralising speculation on his probable escape from many troubles. Around him, in their carved and gilded bins, reposed the ashes of his less fortunate ancestry [illegible] whom had better been buried in their [illegible] in their second childhood. The [illegible] pointed out the positions of various kings and queens; and I asked him as we were about to depart, which receptacle was reserved for Isabella II.?

"*No se sabe todavia.*" (It is not yet known.)

"*Que importa?*" (What does it matter?) said the fat young man in an irreverent tone of levity. "*Despues de la murte para mi todo es bueno.*" (After death, one place, as far as I am concerned, is as good as another.)

"*Hombre!*" cried the sacristan, as he stooped down to blow out the row of candles within the grating, "you should not (puff) talk lightly (puff) in the presence of the sacred (puff) remains of their Catholic (puff) Majesties."

The assertion of Death's levelling republicanism by the fat young man, and the undignified official remonstrance of the wheezy little sacristan, as he stooped and puffed over his flaring and swealing candles—contrasting so strangely with all that solemn gloom, and visible darkness of funereal pomp—awakened a sense of the ludicrous, much stronger than description can give an idea of: and we laughed with such irreverent heartiness, that I do not doubt but the old sexton (who laughed a little, too, himself) would ease his conscience by cursing us all for a set of blasphemous heretics.

From the foundations we ascended to the summit of the pile, at least, as high as could be reached, which was only the gallery round the dome; this, however, commanded a fine view of the gridiron-shaped building below, and the surrounding country, vast and grand, but not particularly beautiful; a dark, frowning range of mountains on the one

hand, and the boundless plains of Castille on the other.

Our blind Cornelio pointed out different places in the horizon. He had shown a wonderful memory in conducting us through the labyrinth of narrow passages in the walls, and corkscrew staircases, telling us about each statue as he came to its pedestal, when we emerged on the gallery within the dome, which is ornamented with great gilt statues of the apostles; specially informing us that this St. Pablo was not the St. Paul of London, which he chuckled over as a most excellent joke for heretics of the Anglican persuasion. In the picture-galleries, however, where [illegible] corners and angles to guide him- [illegible] had to guess his distances; he usually [illegible] one picture and described the next.

In the church there are a great number of gigantic music-books, said to be written and illuminated by one monk. They are about four feet by three, each containing sixty or seventy leaves of vellum richly illuminated; one would not have thought a single individual's lifetime could have sufficed for such voluminously velluminous works. We also saw the library, where they showed us a manuscript Alcoran

on vellum; and many other things we saw which if they were written in a book, it might be set up on a shelf of the Escorial library and remain till called for. The fact is, we were weary of this great magnificently ugly place before we had half done it, and were very glad when we were allowed by our guides to go away.

Riding to Guadarrama we turned up the mountain, and had to ascend by the zigzag road to, I should think, about two thousand feet above the level of the plain. It was very cold towards the top, and there was here and there a patch or two of snow. We had been afraid to go by La Granja as it was not known whether the road was passable for snow, that pass being much higher. There was a mighty rushing wind, very keen and piercing, which blew our cloaks about our ears in a manner very trying to our tempers.

There is nothing, perhaps, more annoying in the category of grievances incident to clothing, than the disposal of a vast mass of heavy drapery on a gusty day; when you fling it over your shoulders and the whole thing flaps in your face like an avalanche, smothering up all your frantic indignation and

endeavours. Then the beasts you ride, finding, as they are sure to do, that they have you at a disadvantage, are sure to be as inconvenient as possible. We came to the conclusion that the *capa*, which is not a bad thing for slow travelling on horseback in rain, is eminently unadapted for wind.

The aspect of the country on the other side of the mountain-range we had passed was more barren and desolate, even, than the country surrounding Madrid. However it was not so flat. It looked like a volcanic formation of eruptive hills with loosish sandy slopes on which vegetation found [illegible] ting and seemed liable to slip away.

[illegible] ld not see Segovia as we had hoped. [illegible] g to Fonda San Rafael, we supped on a [illegible] walked out to see the sunset. We came to where a flock of goats were being milked near a farm-house by the banks of the stream. The manners of the goats towards one another are curious. They seem to take a pleasure in a sort of sham-fight, as regular in its tactics as a hick-hack, smick-smack cutlass-encounter between two desperate smugglers at Astleys. The combatants push with their heads down, leaning against each other's

horns; shortly they rear high up, and coming down mutually tap their fore-feet sharply together. Some of them would do this eight or nine times running. We got a bowl of goat's milk to drink. It is not quite so good as cow's milk, but there is no great difference.

Here, next morning, we turned off the Salamanca road towards Segovia. About half-way stands on a barish hill the Real Sitio of Rio Frio. This is a hunting-box of the kings of Spain; but being a huge oblong building it was objected that it was too big for a box, and might be more properly called a hunting imperial, or at least a chase-seat. Soon after, the spires and towers of Segovia overtopped an intervening hill.

The entrance of the city by this way passes through a long, straggling, dilapidated suburb on a low ridge. Overhanging beam-crossed gables, propped on posts of wood and granite, or here and there a few Moorish columns, frown above deep-arched portals. Between this suburb and the main body of the city is a valley, spanned by the celebrated Roman aqueduct, the honour of whose construction is however disputed by Hercules, the Moors, and the Devil. It is built

arch over arch, growing lighter towards the top, and is a very graceful piece of masonry.

At length we reached the irregular-shaped, unevenly-built *plaza*. The shabbiest wretched old tumble-down house-front in the whole place was that of the principal Segovian posada. We were assured, however, by the mozo de la cuadra, whom we met under the rickety gateway, that there were splendid new apartments at our disposition; and effectually the inside turned out both much better and more ample than the dismal narrow front led us to anticipate. Our window commanded a good view [illegible]*a*, at the opposite side of which is the [illegible]ancel-end of the cathedral, rich with flying [illegible] The inside is fine; the stone roof struck [illegible] heavy; there are beautiful windows of stained glass.

Next to the *alcazar*—a noble top-heavyish Gothic tower surrounded by a mass of peak-roofed, French-chateau-like buildings. Before the court-yard was an iron railing. As we walked in, the porter at the gate, judging by our get-up that we were a couple of inquisitive Andalusian *arrieros*, stopped us.

"Nobody can enter; it is the hour of the *siesta*, and all the garrison are asleep."

"*Caramba*; we cannot help that. *Nosotros somos caballeros Ingleses que tenemos bula special para ver a todo.* (We are English gentlemen who have special license to see everything); get you speedily to the snoring captain of the garrison, and tell him that, with permission, we desire to inspect the premises."

The guardian of the gate on hearing this, bowed very low, and entering the fortress shortly emerged with an artillery captain, whom we begged to excuse (*disimular*) our disturbing him, as we had only a short time in Segovia, and should not like to leave it without inspecting this precious stone in the battled tiara of Castille. He received us with great courtesy, and showed us over the whole place. We fraternised the more from finding we had many common friends among the artillery officers at Seville. This alcazar is now converted into a great (I belive *the* great) college of artillery. It contains many magnificent rooms with rich carved and blazoned and gilded ceilings.

We saw the schools of design and of models, the gymnasium, and the miniature cannons and mortars

which the boys are taught to manœuvre with little ponies. Taking leave of the captain we now descended to the banks of the Eresma, whence the view of the alcazar which crowns the abutting end of a rocky promontory, whose base is washed by a turn of the stream, tempted H—— to sketch it in his pocket-book.

While he was at work, and I sat by eating oranges under a shady tree, two men drew near from behind. We were rather afraid they would take us up before the authorities for sketching the fortress; but they only begged us to *dissimulate* their curiosity in wishing to see the sketch, and entered into conversation. Among other things they asked if we were not Italians, as they judged us to be from our manner of speaking the Castillian.

Afterwards we endeavoured in vain to get into the Templars' church, and the Parral convent. Ascending the wooded and grassy glade, along which the river runs beneath the long rocky ridge, the city above lit by sunset, flickered in the watery mirror like palaces of fire. The aspect of Segovia from this valley is very striking and beautiful. The brow of the rock is fringed with dilapidated battlements, beyond

which slope irregular terraces of quaint old-fashioned houses, and the sky-line is broken by many lofty towers and spires besides those of the alcazar and cathedral. Far away beyond the gorge, snowy peaks deeply tinged with purple carmine "stood up and took the evening."

We agreed that Segovia and Cuenca were commendable termini for a romantic honeymoon-tour, supposing the parties to be of suitable disposition—that is to say, that the lovely bride should have a taste for water-colours, and the noble and stalwart bridegroom should be willing to carry the paint-box and camp-stool, and make himself generally useful as a moveable figure of the foreground. I wonder if I shall ever revisit these places in that humble capacity? We shall start for Valladolid to-morrow. This may as well stop here, so farewell. I have a bad cold, which makes me and my letter dull.

P.S.—Since finishing my letter I have been loading my revolver, which I had discharged as we rode into Segovia. I blew, as my custom is, down the barrels, to see if they were clear, and finding one stopped up I fired a cap to free the stoppage. To my surprise

instead of a slight snap and flash there was a tremendous report, and a great piece of plaster fell out of a hole in the wall. One of the barrels had missed fire, it appeared, and the charge remained in. H——, who had been in bed an hour, woke up and asked if I had killed anybody; and when I told him it was an accident, he begged me not to do it again, and went to sleep.

If you write again after receiving this, your only chance of hitting me is at Yrun, where we shall probably have to stay a day or two to dispose of our ponies; and as those days may be dull enough while we are waiting for the wretchedly-low highest bid of reluctant purchasers, do write a word to keep us in good humour.

LETTER XXIII.

VALLADOLID, *May* 12.

ON Monday, May 10th, early in the morning, we set off for Valladolid. By some little misapprehension of the points of the compass we took the direct north road, instead of the north-east. When we had got to the top of the hill to the north of Segovia, and seen a view of the city by sunrise—if possible more lovely than yester-evening's sunset—we discovered, by inquiry, that we were in the way to Escarabajos instead of Coca. So we went down into the valley again, and followed the course of the Eresma.

The country soon became dreary and sterile. The soil is a sharp white sand, less adapted for vegetation than for the sprinkling of kitchen flags. After crossing the Eresma again a league or so on this side of Santa Maria de la Nieva, we came upon a forest of huge pines. This sort of pine I had

never seen before. It is in character more like Scotch fir than any I know; but its shape is more cabbage headed, and the colour a most brilliant emerald green. The feathery hair (for I don't think a pine can properly be said to possess foliage) was about five inches long, the cones as big as a smallish cocoa-nut.

As there were a good many lying about which seemed fresh fallen, H——, whose brother is rather a pine-fancier, made an onslaught upon one to get some seeds to carry home: and when I saw they were as big as an almond, I began to chop away with my knife on my own account. These little pine-nuts, which have a hardish, thin shell, are very good to eat and taste like the grains of soft, scarcely ripened wheat, only richer; on the whole, perhaps, to compare small things with great, they taste more like a butter-nut than anything else. Like other good things they are not very easy to get at; for the cones are very hard to split, and exude a varnishing gum, very annoying to the fingers.

Though we did not rise much from the banks of the Eresma to Santa Maria, the country thence to Naba de la Cova has all the character of bleak,

desolate table-land on a mountain-top. After Naba, however, it began to shew more signs of cultivation, and the sandy excoriation of the country's face was here and there plastered with patches of grass.

At Naba, where we had stopped to inquire our way of a knot of loiterers before the posada door (and to light our cigars), after some little conversation an old man had asked us whether we were Spaniards or foreigners, himself inclining to believe that we were Andaluzes. Not very far out of the village a party of women and children, weeding near the edge of a barley field, cried out to us and begged to know when the *Funcion* at Coca was to take place.

"What Funcion?" said we.

"Surely you, caballeros, are the *oficiales toreros* (bull-fighting officials) who are coming from Segovia to have a *fiesta de toros* on the day of San Fulano."

"Your pardon, fair ladies, we are no bull-fighters, but English gentlemen, on their travels, at your service." On this they laughed and cried,

"*Mentiras!* (fibs) *carai que embusteros son los Andaluzes!*" (good lack, what story-tellers are the Andalusians!) So we left them under their delusion.

The castle of Coca soon appeared in the distance.

It did not seem anything very remarkable, though we had read in the guide-book that it was a splendid specimen of a Castillian fortress. We inquired of an old man, who was driving a herd of horses into the town, what sort of an edifice it was? He replied, "Poco," (a mere nothing), and shook his head contemptuously over the insignificance of the ruin.

However, as we had arrived early, and had dined before sunset, we repaired to the castle, and found it indeed a very striking ruin. It rises from the bottom of a great hole about forty feet deep, excavated near the brow of a hill. This great cavity is walled round like a well. From its edge, of course, when you see all the bottom of the castle, otherwise concealed in the pit, the grandeur of the building is much increased.

It is a regular old-fashioned, heraldic-looking castle, with pepper-box turrets (Bartizans I think) at the top corners. It is entered by a bridge on the north side. The interior is of a somewhat modern arabesque. The old posadero of La Cruz, to whom we were recommended for information, knew nothing about it, but thought the Duques de Alva had been its *alcaides* in the old time.

There is a tall watch-tower standing on higher ground than the castle, 400 or 500 yards distant, and of course there is a tradition of an under-ground passage connecting them. I never yet saw an under-ground passage in my life except one, three yards long, into an icehouse in the side of a hill, and I don't much believe such things ever existed, except in novels—do you?

At sunset, on my way back to the posada, passing through the straggling outskirts of the town, I stopped before the gate of an untidy little garden. Here an aged priest in a very seedy, old, ragged *sotana,* with a greasy black scullcap on the top of his head, was stooping down and sticking little lath crosses in the ground.

He had a little boy helping him, who carried an armful of these crosses, which he took one by one, held it up before him, mumbled something that sounded like a prayer in Latin, stooped down and made a hole with the end of it, into which he dropped a pinch of some powder out of a paper parcel, planted the cross in the hole, and then holding his hand over it, seemed to be giving it his blessing.

All this was done quickly, but with much seriousness and solemnity on the part of the priest, and seemed to be an affair of daily business; for the whole of one end of his garden was planted as close as could be with these little crosses (interspersed with onions), and indeed must have contained some thousands. But there was something comic in the appearance of the old figure, who had a very long, crooked, hooked nose, and a back bent double. He was, moreover, blind of an eye, and the other had a sort of oblique tendency to peep round the corner of his nose, which prevented one from doubting that he would have squinted if he had possessed two.

As he rose from planting a cross, and was taking another from the boy, he caught sight of me looking over his gate.

"Adios, Señor Andaluz," said he, beckoning me with the cross in his hand,—"Welcome to the garden of the souls!" (*En hora buena sea entrado Vmd. en el jardin de las almas!*) "Shall I plant a cross for the benefit of your soul, *amigo? Vamos*—this very one shall be for you."

"*Muchisimo le agradezco a su reverencia, Señor Cura,*" (I am extremely obliged to your reverence,

Sir Priest), said I, taking off my *sombrero*, and entering the garden. As I approached, he was stooping down over the cross; and the boy, to whom his back was turned, made a sign (putting his finger to his temple, and turning it backwards and forwards as one bores a hole with a pricker,) to signify to me that there was a screw loose in his master's understanding.

When my cross had been duly consecrated, I ventured to inquire in what manner its establishment would benefit my soul?

"Perhaps you may not be aware," he replied, "that every cross which is set up here on earth deprives the devil of a soul; for the number of souls received into Heaven will be exactly measured by the number of crosses set up on earth. As I have nothing particular to do, I make fifty of these holy symbols of our faith every morning, and set them up here in my garden every evening before sunset. You see I drop in a few onion-seeds beneath each. When the onion comes to be of a good size, I pull it up, and the cross with it. The onion goes into the *olla*, and the cross (which is by that time nearly rotten) into the fire. But at the moment when I

pull up the onion and the cross, a man dies, and a soul is saved."

"But, when you pull up my cross and onion, shall I die too?"

"*Es regular que si* (probably), but what signifies that? You will be saved as sure as my onion is cooked."

"But if the devil is continually losing souls in this wholesale manner, I wonder he does not come by in the night and pull up your crosses."

"I should like to see him try, or any of his demons. They dare not, my son—they dare not touch my crosses with their own impious hands; but they do what they can to instigate wicked little boys to come by when I am out of the way, and pull up my crosses in great numbers. And sometimes the demons will undo the sneck of the gate, and drive in a score or so of *malditos puercos*, (cursed pigs), who make great havoc both with my crosses and my onions; and I have to plant them again as it pleases Providence, it being impossible for me to tell, unless I were a prophet, which cross belongs to which onion; and this no doubt makes considerable confusion in the dates of salvation in particular souls; and doubtless

some unlucky ones who happen to die while the pigs are in the garden, are cast away altogether."

"But why is the devil obliged to overturn crosses by deputy?"

"You see, my son, if the devil were to touch one of these sacred emblems, it would cleave to him for ever. If the cross were so large and heavy that he could not carry it away with him, he would be held there in shame and torture to the end of time. That is the reason why it is so much the custom to have huge stone crosses in the centre of market-places; for where men are selling and buying, and gossiping and lying, there the devil always would like to be in the midst of them. But in the case of the smaller crosses, of this size for instance, if he touched it, it would stick to him, and brand him for ever among his execrable brethren with a mark of the most indelible shame; and moreover its holy influence would neutralize a great part of his malign efficacy in doing mischief."

"It seems a pity that some saint did not, in times past, find an opportunity of clapping a cross on the devil's back unawares."

"It has often and often been tried, but Saint

Iago himself is not man enough to take Satan at a disadvantage. This desirable climax is reserved for the triumph of the last day. Then the angels Michael and Gabriel, will pin him between the crosses of the good and bad thief. These will stick to him like pitch. They will cast him down headlong into the darkest bottom of hell, where he will lie between these crosses, gnashing his teeth in great anguish, for all the rest of eternity.

"But will these holy engines, remaining in contact with him for so long a time, effect no salutary influence on his destiny?"

"Doubtless they would, if the cross of the good thief were to happen to come uppermost; but it is to be presumed that Michael, who owes him an old grudge, will send down some trustworthy angel along with Satan in his fall, to turn him in case of accidents, and leave him with the bad cross uppermost. But the devil, who never neglects a chance, and is desperately persevering, will spend all his time in attempting to wriggle himself round, and who knows what time may bring to pass."

"I thank your reverence much for this most valuable disquisition, which I shall take care to

make known to the world at large. I kiss your hand, *Señor cura.*"

"I kiss yours," said he. "Adieu."

Next day we set off early for Valladolid, not by Olmedo, as we had intended, but by Mojados, a road which does not appear on the map, and does not appear very clearly on the face of the country, being often lost in the sand; however, they told us that it was a shorter way.

We rode the greater part of the day through vast and sombre pine forests. The conversation, partly apropos of the crazy old curé's theories, and partly, perhaps, influenced by the gloomy scenery of the forest, turned on the future punishment of sin. H—— advocated rather universalist doctrines: but I said I could not conceive that sin should not leave some dreadful mark; scared and furrowed traces of the soul's disease, which even eternity could never wear away.

"Here, where we can exist only in the shifting, momentary Present, life's distractions cloud over the memory alike of good and evil. If it were not for oblivion, experience would be too heavy a burden for man to bear upon his shoulders—he would sink in

the mire, broken down before his time, and life would become at once a state of torment instead of trial.

"But when the trial is ended, there is no reason why reward or punishment should not be complete. For this end, memory of all the predominant good or evil of our past lives will be sufficient: and supposing the evil prevails, imagine what a revelation that would be. Stripped of the semi-transparent bandage in which she went half-blindfold upon earth, the soul will be laid bare, to be haunted without respite by all those hideous nightmares of sin and shame and horror, which now and then, one at a time, peep, dimly seen, beneath the corner of the curtain.

"We shall awake, amid a confused huddle of ghosts —a cloud is still before our eyes. A trumpet sounds behind the veil! It opens, and rolling away on either side, reveals a blinding blaze of glory—to these how beautiful—to those how dreadful! An influence like a mighty rushing sound divides the multitude. On one hand kneel myriads of bright and blessed spirits, bowed in adoration; on the other, shivering, stand a crowd of dismal demons, self-convinced of their just condemnation!

"To the one a smiling heaven of sunshine opens, with a voice of heavenly music, crying "Come, ye faithful!"—to the other, through falling darkness, a thunder-tone of wrath muttering "Go, ye wicked!"

We emerged from the forest at a small village called Cazarén. Here, in the middle of the market-place, were a party of men and women, with a great heap of the cones of the pine and a fire. They singe them in the flames to get rid of the stickiness, and then open them on a block with a small, one-handed adze. We bought a *cuartillo* (about a quart) of them for about three half-pence, and kept cracking and eating them all the way to Mojados.

The country round about all seems a sunken plain with here and there flat-topped hills, with crumbling sandy sides, which look as if by some accident they had remained of the original level.

We crossed one of these flat tops to get to Mojados, and thence overlooking the broad arid valley, fancied we saw Valladolid about twelve miles off, but could not be certain. At Mojados we dined in the Parador of the diligence, for we had now struck upon a *camino real*. After dinner there was a guitar *funcion*, in which a professional gentleman, the *mozo de la*

cuadra, and H——, were all strumming more or less together.

Valladolid lies on a dead flat, and is an ugly city, in a frightful country, by no means worth riding through or riding to. Even the sunset lights by which we saw it first, failed to gild it with any colour of enthusiasm.

Observing a grassy lane that diverged from the road within a mile or so of the city, and as we were in no hurry to enter Valladolid, we turned into it, and lying down on a flowery bank lit our cigars, and prepared to enjoy the sunset.

We had lightened the ponies of their alforjas, and freed them of their bridles, so that they could pick the fresh grass at ease. They seemed to like it so much that we began to pity their case for having been kept so long on dry barley. They had not had any green meat all the way from Granada, and all the time they stood in Madrid.

Two men with great green bundles of lucerne on their heads came by in the most apposite manner. They at once offered to sell, and we bought the largest of their bundles, thinking what a treat this lush herbage would be to the dry vitals of our beasts.

We strewed it on the ground, and they fell upon it voraciously enough at first, but soon the ingenious obstinacy of the animals discovered that we took a pleasure in seeing them eat the lucerne, and they began to draw off the green heap, which they could devour by great mouthfuls, to nibble at foolish little points of grass-blades, which they pretended to consider sweeter.

We attempted for some little time to disabuse them of their error, jerking their stupid heads back over the heap again, and only allowing them to eat in peace when they ate our lucerne. This course, however, was found to disturb the tranquillity of our smoke and their meal in about equal ratios—so we let the ungrateful fools feed where they liked; and when the sun was down, rode into Valladolid.

Like our ponies, however, possessing in some degree the quality of firmness, we were resolved not to relinquish the valuable vegetation for which we had paid a considerable sum, not exceeding threepence. It was agreed, that if H—— (who is handy with cords and lashings) would make it up in a neat roll, and cord it with one of our halters, I would carry it in, and we would leave it in their mangers all

night, and see if they did not see reason before morning.

As we entered the gate of the city (it being now dark), this great bundle of green stuff greatly excited the suspicion of the *dogana.*

"*Qu'es esto,* what's this? (holding the lamp to it), *Vamos a ver que tal es la sierpe que debajo desta yerba s'esconde.* Let us see what sort of serpent lurks beneath the grass (ferreting for bottles as he spoke). It is probable that in such a meadow we shall meet some dew."

"*Nada hay señor Doganero sino unas mielgas—nada mas* (it is nothing but lucerne)."

"What the deuce do your worships bring lucerne into Valladolid for, *carajo?*"

"A slight salad for our beasts, *con licenzia.* They have had a long journey, and eaten nothing but barley since they left Granada, *de modo que bastante secas tienen las tripas* (so that their tripes are sufficiently dried up)."

Finding that there was no hay to be made of our grass, one of them seized my dagger, and examining it unsheathed, very much as if he wished to become its owner, said—

"What business have you to carry forbidden arms?"

I now began to swagger in earnest. "We are very principal English cavaliers, and have a written license in our passport to carry what arms we like. We are not accustomed to be kept from our suppers in the gates of insignificant cities, but rather to ride in with an escort and sup with ambassadors; and, if we are now travelling incognito by way of amusement, it is no reason why we should be treated in a manner unbeseeming our rank and importance."

This speech, which I delivered in a serious tone of offended dignity over my beggarly bundle of herbs, had more effect than I had anticipated; for the man at once gave up the dagger, and begged pardon for having treated so distinguished foreigners in a manner for which, we must allow, that the darkness and our disguise had given some excuse.

We now entered the city by the Puerta del Campo, a wide and rather handsome street, up and down which we wandered some time without being able to find a posada. At last we found one, and went through into the stable, where I cast the green stuff into the manger and began to unsaddle.

We had been followed into the stable by the old *huesped* of the inn, who was unfortunately both imbecile and drunk; we told him to take away some donkeys who were running loose in the stable, and who showed an immediate and obstinate proclivity to the vegetation our ponies had despised, and thrust their outstretched noses into it again while I was busy unsaddling, regardless of the intercalary kicks and cuffs I could give them meanwhile. But he only stood hiccuping irrelevant matters, till on being spoken sharply to, he began to revile us.

"Who the devil are you, cursed Biscayan muleteers that come and order me about in my own stable, *carajo?* Turn out the *burricos*, quotha—turn them out yourselves, and turn yourselves out with them, Biscayan *burros* as you are, *carajo!*"

"Be silent, you old numskull. Have you lived long enough to lose nine-tenths of the little wits you ever had, and to put nine of your ten toes on the threshold of Death, without learning how to receive guests of distinction, when by any remote chance they casually honour your dilapidated kennel of a *Posadilla?*"

But he was too far gone in drink and dotage to

be able at all to perceive the distinction of those guests who at present honoured him; or indeed to do anything but totter and stagger about, holding a very unsteady *candil*. So we adopted his suggestion, and turned out the donkeys into a small courtyard ourselves; he cursing us all the time for insolent, beggarly, Biscayan varlets.

As we carried our alforjas, and saddles and bridles upstairs, we were met and civilly received by the *posadera*, his young and melancholy-looking wife, who made signs to us that he was not all right in his wits, and tried to calm his indignation. She showed us up to a rather desolate bed-room, but could not prevent him following and making an exceedingly inconvenient tumult over our baggage. We thought of going to another place, but remembering the difficulty of finding a posada at all, and the trouble of saddling again, and, to crown all, the lucerne now lying loose in the manger, we concluded it was best to lock up our room and leave our things, and go out to sup anywhere we could find in the cafés of the city.

Taking a look in at the stable, we found one of our persevering donkeys had got in again by some

means, and was eating voraciously out of the Moor's manger. We kicked him out ignominiously with the vehement foot of impatience, fastened the door of the court-yard, and left the Moor and Cid munching languidly alone.

We wandered among gay crowds of people taking the *fresco* under the colonnades of Valladolid's Quadrant, found the Café de Cervantes, supped, and went home to bed.

Next morning our host was sober and civil, and it seemed that, when out of his cups, the young wife could manage him like a child. We breakfasted at the café; saw the museum, where there are very few good pictures and a great many bad and clumsy and vulgar statues by Hernandez, a celebrated sculptor, in painted wood. There was a striking little statue of a tall meagre St. Francis, which did not look as if it had been cut by the same chisel, though the showman said it was. It looked more like the handiwork of Cano. There was some very fine oak carving by Berruguete.

We took a Gothic and Vandalic glance at the university and library, and went to the other side of the city to look at the silversmiths' shops, which

are said to have a style peculiar to Valladodid. The Puente de la Plateria had been pulled down, but the Calle de la Plateria has a good many silversmiths' shops. I saw nothing that attracted the eye of cupidity except a little hook and eye of silver filigree, which I bought, though I am very poor. On the most moderate calculation we shall be ten days getting to Irun, and I have only nine five-franc-pieces. H—— has twelve. We shall have no means of drawing money at Irun, therefore in order to get across the frontier we depend on the sale of our ponies.

We are to set off at four this afternoon to make an easy stage of three leagues to the Venta de Tijero in the cool of the evening. It is three-thirty now, and I have been writing by steam to get this letter ready, and now I am going to the post; so, with a great deal of love, which I have only time to mention thus incidentally, Farewell.

LETTER XXIV.

BURGOS, *May* 16.

LEAVING Valladolid by the gate of Burgos, we crossed the river Pisuerga by a long and handsome old bridge at Cabezon, and arrived at the Venta de Tijero about an hour after dark. It was a large square, new, clean-looking place, very different from the rambling, dirty old ventas of Andalucia.

Having disposed of our ponies, and told the *mozo* to carry the alforjas up into our room, we entered the kitchen under the gateway and began to forage for our supper. There were some fishes like dace lying about, and we inquired what they were a dozen.

"Your worships are not about to eat them raw?" said the fat old host, who seemed to be somewhat of a character.

"Not so, *señor huesped*, but fried in oil, which also we shall be happy to purchase of you."

"*Caramba*, that is not our way of doing business

in the north. The venteros here are not impostors and robbers as they are in your Andalucia. My wife shall cook you as many as you can eat, and I shall charge you to-morrow morning according as it pleases Providence to bless your worships with an appetite."

There was a good deal of company in the kitchen, and one of them, a tall, lean old man, of a sombre cast of countenance, took up his parable and said, "These gentlemen, it seems to me, are not Andaluzes, but English; and it is *regular* (probable) that they are engineers of the railway which is to be constructed from Madrid to Paris."

We confessed we were Englishmen, and the company took the rest of his proposition as a self-evident corollary; for they began inquiring eagerly whether the country was practicable, and how long it would be before the railway was constructed. We, who had never heard that such a thing was contemplated, nevertheless thought it a pity to disappoint them of the official information they anticipated; so we assured them that the country from Madrid, as far as we had gone, was eminently suited to the construction of a line; that the main difficulty we

foresaw was in crossing the Pyrenees; but that to English engineers everything was possible; for, if they could find no valley to go through, they thought nothing of cutting a hole through several leagues of the heart of a mountain: nathless the ventero need not make himself uneasy about the loss of his traffic on the road as yet, for there was no probability that the railway would be in working order before at least seven or eight years. This announcement seemed satisfactory to all parties. The conversation changed; and, apropos of something which I forget, the lean old man asserted very solemnly that no animal would eat Christian flesh; and that this was an eminent proof of the supremacy of man over the rest of creation.

"But, my dear sir, don't you remember the case of 'that prophet' whom the lion ate, and the donkey stood in the way? It is written in the Old Testament, so there can be no doubt of it."

"If it be written in the Old Testament, it becomes evident that that prophet was no Christian, but a Jew."

"But, if lions eat Hebrews, how much more will they eat Christians; since it is a notable fact that

Christians are by far the tenderest diet? Besides which, sharks (lobos marinos) have eaten many Christians in the West Indies."

"With respect to marine animals I do not speak; but no animal of the earth eats Christian flesh, and this is a Catholic truth."

"Is not the worm an animal of the earth, and does it not eat the most pious Christians? In the church of the Caridad, in Seville, there is a picture of an archbishop in an open coffin. All over his body great maggots are creeping in every direction, and, indeed, seem to have eaten the greater part of him, for in many parts the bones are bare. Now, as this picture is exposed in so sacred a place, it must be presumed, on the authority of the Catholic Church, that archbishops (whose flesh is rather more Christian than ordinary) are actually eaten by worms. The picture is called the 'Triumph of Death,' (El Triunfo de la Muerte), and was painted by Valdes de Leal."

"This 'Triumph of Death,' and the case of being eaten by worms, which is indeed ignominious, has been doubtless ordained for the humiliation of fleshly pride. Death is no respecter of persons. He brings down

both young and old. The *Señora huespada* here, for example, has had ten children—('Eleven,' cried the landlady, from above the hissing frying-pan)—eleven children, I say, and death has removed them all except one."

"*Yo soy el,*" (I am he) cried a piping little voice in the back-ground; and we saw a poor little sickly boy, who did not look otherwise than rather likely food for the worms himself.

As a plateful of fish was now ready, we retired to the *comedor* (eating-place), and enjoined the bereaved mother to make haste with another relay.

After supper, going out to feed the ponies, the Moor was not hungry. I thought he might be thirsty, and led him along the stable towards the well-trough; but when he got opposite the heels of an *entero*, he became so violent that I could not get him further, and was glad to get him back safe to his manger, after a severe fencing-match, in which both sides snorted and screamed and lunged backwards, and flourished their heels very truculently.

As Mahomet could not be persuaded to go to the fountain, I had to untie the bucket-rope and bring

him his drink, after which he ate his supper peaceably, whilst I lay among the straw smoking and listening to his munchings and champings. This sound is musical to the ear of a traveller, who depends on his horse as much as his horse's legs depend upon his teeth.

We were off about seven next morning, and stopped to breakfast at Dueñas. About twelve o'clock, as we were riding along by the side of the road, a *caminero* (road mender and guard) called out to us:—

"Hallo, you there, are you contrabandistas? stop!" We stopped a moment, and said,

"Is that the way you address gentlemen, and begin by throwing imputations upon their character? You deserve no answer—adieu;" and we rode on. He seized his musket, and crying "Stop thieves!" gave chase, now and then presenting his musket as if he meant to shoot. We took no notice of this, and cantered gently on, a little quicker than he could run, for about a mile.

As our ponies were not very fresh, and mine rather lame, we thought it would take too much out of them to distance him altogether; so we pulled up and

waited for him. He arrived panting and puffing, in great perspiration and choler.

"Now, sir," said I, before he had breath enough to speak, "we have given you a slight lesson of civility, which it is not generally requisite to teach Spaniards, whom we have found a courteous people. You appear to be an unfortunate exception; and, feeling that your education had been neglected, we thought a little practical instruction would do you good. If you had spoken civilly to us at first, we should have been happy to show you our papers, and convince you of our respectability on the spot; but, as it is, we have given you a slight run in the sunshine, to sweat the surplus acerbity out of your manners."

"*Carajo!* Spaniards are not accustomed to be made a jest of. I shall arrest you—you shall be fined and imprisoned, *carajo!*" cried he, panting and puffing, and wiping his face with his sleeve.

"You seem a gentleman of great importance and authority; perhaps you are an alcalde!"

"Yes, alcalde I am; and I will alcaldeise you when we come to the next village."

"What is it called?"

"Magas; and its prison is much at your service."

"Ah! señor alcalde of Magas, your principality seems to contain but a few shabbyish cottages; and indeed it must be a poor place which sends its king to work on the road. Still it is something to reign at all. How does *su señora*, the queen, and all the little princes of Magas?"

"Be silent, insolent man. I said I was an alcalde on the road, and there I will make my authority respected."

"Oh! then you are only governor of pickaxes and hammers, with a stone-heap for your throne. But come along, we like your company, and indeed it seems you prefer walking to working. We shall feel it our duty, as you have treated us uncivilly, to take you before the alcalde of the next place; for, though the little eccentricities of your manner (he had cursed us by all the most indecent oaths he could think of) only divert *us*, they might annoy other travellers. Therefore we shall, in a friendly manner, represent to the alcalde that, from the peculiar turn of your mind, you are not so much adapted for this as you might be in some other equally honourable employment. In the meantime pray don't distress yourself by disturbing the serenity of your temper

(he was almost black in the face with rage). Would your worship smoke? (offering a paper of cigarillos.) No? (lighting one myself.) *No haga Vmd. desaires*, pray don't stand on ceremony." He said "No, thank you," very sulkily; but, about this stage of the discourse, he appeared to begin to surmise that he had, metaphorically speaking, put his foot in it. He was a great hulking fellow, more than six feet high, with a stupid, fierce countenance, and a squint. The expression of his face reminded us of a baited bull.

However, now we had begun it, we thought it a pity not to see our *funcion* to an end; so for the next mile, till we reached Magas, I kept sticking *banda-rillas* of chaff into the tough hide of his bovine intellect. H—— suggested that we might lose a good deal of time, and had perhaps better buy him off; but I was decidedly for going before the authorities, "for," said I, "there will ten to one be something to make a story of, and we have had lamentably few adventures lately. It would even be worth while almost to pass a night in prison."

Reaching the village, we inquired for the house of the alcalde. He was not at home, but his wife and daughter appeared at the door. In the meantime,

what with the sultry weather, and much conversation with the *caminero*, I was very thirsty, and persuaded the alcalde's pretty daughter to bring me a glass of water. A crowd of forty or fifty, chiefly women and children, had gathered by the time the alcalde arrived; and I made the best of my time, to have public opinion on our side, by making civil speeches to the bystanders—giving a cigarillo or two to the men—admiring a baby or two in the arms of influential matrons, and insinuating a compliment or two on their own charms to the younger ladies.

The *jefe politico* (political chief) of the place was a quiet, respectable-looking man, dressed in *paño pardo* (brown cloth). I saluted him with respectful ceremony, handed him our papers, and from the saddle delivered a dignified and moderate statement of our case, while he stood in judgment beneath the porch of his house. When I had done, the *caminero* demanded a private audience, and they entered the house together. When they came out again, the alcalde looked rather perplexed and irresolute. Of course he could not understand a word of our passports, which were in English and French. He said copies must be taken of them, and sent to Madrid;

that he could not see we had been to blame, but, as we had brought the man off his work, we had better give him a gratuity of a *peseta.*

"Our papers are in order, as you must clearly see, Señor Alcalde. They are already registered in the archives of all the ambassadors in Madrid. Therefore our names will be sufficient, and these we are prepared to give you. As to giving a gratuity to this man, the trouble he has had is only the result of his little judgment and want of discrimination, in mistaking so principal cavaliers for suspicious persons. He has been insolent, also, to the full extent of his conversational powers. If we encourage this ill behaviour by rewards, we make other travellers on the road all the more liable to be annoyed and impeded by any *caminero, mas tonto que regular* (more foolish than usual), who may take it into his head to stop them. Therefore, with all respect for you, what we take to be your suggestion merely, and not decision, we shall not follow; and have the honour of wishing you a good day."

Hereupon, I put spurs to the Moor, waved my *sombrero* to the company, and we rode along. But

our friend the *caminero* did not at all approve of this arrangement. He ran after us crying "Stop thief!" H—— stopped, and I was slowly moving on, when the man got before me, presented his musket and shouted, "Will you stop, *carajo!* or shall I fire?"

"Fire, you old ass!" said I, "you know as well as I do, that there is no more charge in your musket than there are brains in your head; and if it would go off, you can no more shoot straight than you can look straight with your squint-eyes. Will you rob me in the street, *ladron?* After the alcalde had said, you have no cause to molest us?"

In the midst of this, the alcalde came running up in a great pucker, and said,

"Put down your gun, man! This is out of all course of law—we must refer the matter to the *maestro.*"

H—— now departed with the alcalde and the passports, and I remained entertaining the crowd with an improved *réchauffé* of the gravelling things I had said to my enemy before. He, thinking me the more dangerous man of the two, had remained to keep an eye upon me, which I was glad of, because I knew his absence would enable H——

to get his statement made in peace and quiet, without interruption. Besides which, the audience was by this time unanimously on my side, and laughed so much at the playful little sarcasms with which I kept him in torture, that he found it at last intolerably unpleasant, and, shouldering his escopet, departed amid the jeers of the company.

When he was gone, they told me he was not of this but the next village, and they had always heard he was a very honourable man, but it appeared his conduct, in this instance, had been inexcusable. One of the women asked me if we were not Portuguese, and seemed to be all the better pleased to hear I was not. The *caminero* had confidently asserted we were Alemanes (Germans.)

After about a quarter of an hour H—— returned: the *maestro* had decided in his favour, and reprimanded the *caminero*, telling him "that to create obstructions on the highway was not a means to make foreigners of distinction travel through their country." Who this *maestro* was it did not clearly appear. H—— said he seemed a venerable old man, to whom the alcalde listened with supreme deference.

Perhaps he was the schoolmaster and most learned man of the place.

I was considerably elated with my success as a mob orator, this being the most public display I ever had to make in a foreign language; and though my opponent was certainly a very stupid and sulky fellow, still they seemed to listen impartially to all he said, and only by degrees came over to my side of the quarrel; so that I think I may consider it to a certain extent a triumph in the Spanish idiom. It cost us about an hour and a half's delay.

At Torquemada we dined and took a siesta, the day being very hot. The Moor cuts and stumbles a good deal, and is getting lame. The eight or nine hundred miles we have travelled has told on his constitution. All the latter part of our journey, indeed ever since we left Granada, we have been going as far every day as our ponies could be got to go; and though they had three weeks' rest at Madrid, as we were not there to see after them, I fear they were not fairly treated.

Towards sunset we set off for Quintana, and made the greater part of our stage by starlight. The

posada was very full, and the hostess and her daughters in a great bustle. We could only be accommodated by having beds set up in the store-room; and while we were going to bed they were constantly coming in, to get cakes and *bollos* out of a large chest. At last we lost our patience, and said that they had better take all they wanted once for all, for if they came again we would not let them in. The old woman had asked us whether we were not Spaniards—somebody had suggested we were French, but she did not believe it. I asked her what she thought we were. She answered Madrilenians, and we did not contradict her. I suppose on the strength of this she settled the question among the gossips of the household; for next morning, when a little boy helping in the stables talked about the French gentleman's hack, the mozo de la cuadra rebuked him, saying he ought to know better than to mistake Spaniards for Frenchmen.

We were up very early, and started half an hour before sunrise. The confusion of *arrieros* getting their mules packed in the dark court-yard, and going about with lanterns, reminded us of the Carriers' scene in the hostel of Gadshill:—

1st Carrier.—"I think this be the most rascally house for fleas in all London-road."

2nd Carrier.—"It must be near four of the clock. Charles's wain is over the new chimney."

3rd Carrier.—"Lend me thy lantern, friend!"

1st Carrier.—"Lend thee my lantern? ay! when? Lend me thy lantern, quotha! I know a trick worth two of that."

We had eaten a little chocolate before starting. We baited our beasts at Villa Nueva, but did not breakfast, though I, being very hungry, had a pennyworth of aguardiente, and a half-pennyworth of bread, which I discussed in haste, sitting on the corn-bin. At Celada we breakfasted on two bad watery fishes, made still more nauseous with garlic. After breakfast, and feeding our ponies, we loosened the Moor, and he immediately lay down in our presence, with his head on the stone threshold of the stable door. He looked so wretched and weary and lean, and so changed from the round, sleek, pincushion-plumpness in which he left Seville, that we felt sorry and conscience-stricken. I took his portrait lying at full length.

A party of Biscayans arrived in a lumbering old

rattletrap. They were troublesomely inquisitive, and besides gratuitously remarked that my Spanish was better than H——'s, whom they had scarcely heard open his mouth; so, to bring down their estimate of my linguistry, I gave them a literal translation of that proverb which defines comparisons as odious.

Here we were four leagues from Burgos, and the Moor was so lame, I determined to walk all the way to ease him. On leaving the village I took off my Marsellês jacket and *calzones*, and walked in my *elastica* and white drawers, to be cooler. At Buriel, the Moor showed that, though worn and lean and lame, his spirit was not subdued; for as I stopped to get a drink, he perceived another entero on the other side of the street, when, in spite of all I could do, he pulled violently back, and began kicking at his enemy. In this unruly proceeding he shook off the alforjas and upper clothing, which I had laid across the saddle, into the dust. I begin to lose all hope that the Moor will ever learn to benefit by the uses of adversity. The owner of the ill-used beast, though he swore vigorously at first, when I begged his pardon, was very good-natured, and helped me to pick up my scattered valuables. The woman of the

house where I got a drink asked if I was a play-actor, judging I suppose from the gay colours of my dress, which was indeed theatrical enough. A sky-blue knitted woollen vest opening down the front, with a broad embroidered border of yellow and scarlet, clasped with the filigree *broche* I had got in Valladolid—my loins girt with a crimson *faja*, striped with white, green, and purple—my lower extremities in tight-fitting white drawers, continued below the knee by embroidered *bottines* of yellow leather. My sombrero, too, was very high-peaked, and adorned with two huge tufts of black silk on the rim and crown. Each particular item of attire I have had occasion to purchase, has always been selected with an *arrière pensée* to my *arriero* costume having some day to figure on the boards of the Hovingham theatre. We intend to write a Piece with Brigands in it on purpose; and between our wardrobes, I think we could turn out a gang of eight or nine very respectable ruffians in the *dégagée* demi-toilette of the robbers' cave.

We have passed as belonging to sundry nations on our way: Italians, Portuguese, French, Germans, Andalusians, Madrilenians, Biscayans: and sundry

professions — pottery men, equestrian performers, railway engineers, pedlars, bull-fighters, miners, and play-actors.

The country, as we approached Burgos, had been improving, the hills getting rounder at the top, and the soil less sandy. From a windy height we saw the twin-spires of Burgos's beautiful cathedral.

As we were entering beneath the dark-arched gateway, the *doganero*, who was loitering some little way off outside, came running up, and calling out,— "Hallo, stop, you Manchegos! I must see what you have in the alforjas!" We stopped and told him who we were, and he let us pass without examination. We have really, on the whole, been very little troubled with custom-house regulations. But these abuses (I mean custom-houses), being the relic of barbarous times, to which they were greatly better adapted than the present day, are very much less felt when you travel in the old barbarous fashion on horse-back, when they can feel your saddle-bags and let you go, than when you are a passenger in steam-boats and railways. Then, instead of filtering through by driblets, suspicious packages come in a great volley; and, as is the case in almost all

grievances, the ceremony and waiting is much more than the hardship of having your luggage searched.

I was not so much tired with my twelve miles' walk as I expected to be, and indeed am, as you may suppose, much stronger than I was. I think I may congratulate myself now fairly on having quitted the condition of an invalid; for, during the greater part of this journey, I have been ten or twelve hours a day in the saddle, and find myself no worse, but the better—only rather thinner than I was when I left Seville.

Arrived in Burgos, we had to settle whether, in the present dilapidated state of our finances, it was prudent to go to the best inn; but being weary, and hungry, and dusty, the desire of comfortable washing, and food, and beds, overcame our economical scruples. Leading our beasts in under the lofty portal of the Fonda de las Diligencias, it appeared that our outward men did not carry any conviction of our respectability to the minds of the hostelry's understrappers. One of them, a handsome, stupid-looking giant about seven feet high, superciliously looking down upon us, inquired what we were come for?

No doubt, he simply meant to inform himself what

gentleman's baggage we had undertaken to transport somewhere, and he was merely treating us to the ordinary patronising airs it was his wont to use towards muleteers. But the hungry and weary British lion is not accustomed to such usage.

"Come for?" we cried in one breath, "Come for? *tontillo!* (you little simpleton!) Is it a custom to ask gentlemen when they brighten your posada's portals with their presence, what they come for? Come for? Why, dinner—supper—beds—breakfast—and provender for our horses! Here, take them to the stables; and you, other one, carry these alforjas up to our apartment!"

We had a very decent dinner, which we did all the more justice to from having been starved since the Escorial. We had a comfortable room, and our beds were not infested with vermin. Before going to bed I put wet bandages on the Moor's fetlock, which he cuts with the heel of his off shoe. I hope it may take out the inflammation. I have been keeping it wet all to-day too.

The post-office was not open this morning when we went at first. The cathedral, with which we solaced our impatience, is a mass of the richest carving inside

and out. In one of the *sacristias* they showed us a carved oak chest, which the Cid had sent for from Valencia, charged with his effects; but it had never reached its destination, and is kept here as a relic. Instead of being affected with pity of the Cid for the loss of his wardrobe, our thoughts turned to our own portmanteaux, now on the road from the metropolis to the frontier, per galera. Alas! how much more interesting to the unlearned are contemporary events than those of history.

We now returned through the sombre gothic gateway, niched with statues of Burgalese worthies, which opens from the old town upon the bridge over the Arlanzon, and seeking the post-office once more, were this time successful.

I found in the list, No. 981, the name Tagtag, which, as it seemed about as near as a Spanish post-officer was likely to transcribe the word Cayley from an English superscription, I asked to see. I recognised with delight a well-known, much-loved specimen of excellent penwomanship, and broke the blossom branch of hawthorn waving over the bell of your device in wax of roseate hue.

I could not read it there, and carried it over to the

gardens on the other side of the river, and sat down to peruse it at leisure under the shady trees. Thank you for that pretty little reprimand for my rash conduct at the *Batanes*. You have some show of reason in saying that it was a cruel and heartless temerity that could risk spoiling a pair of hearts for the sake of a pair of pistols, but you must reflect that it was not my own pistol, but H——'s, which he had trusted to my keeping.

I see I have not put my case well, and that you will say that one of the hearts was not mine, and only trusted to my keeping too, therefore I will not try to defend myself; and indeed it is the best and shortest way, to repent at once and confess my error.

I am glad to hear you are more cheerful since you came to town. I told you you would be, though I cannot quite away with your complimentary interpretation of the symptom, that it is only because I shall be there too again so soon. Of course I try for my own sake to believe so as much as I can, but I am aware that the bustle of dinner-parties and balls, and ordering and trying on dresses, and choosing ribbons and gloves, and parasols, and all those ten thousand things whose necessity blocks up Regent

Street with ladies' carriages, cannot be without its salutary effect on the spirits of even the most etherial invalids of romance.

Ah, how I picture to myself the day of my return to the great city! I see the gardens and scattered suburbs. I see the Waterloo Station. I am in a cab—rare vehicle, whose jolting is made smooth, and whose rattling is made musical by the magic of patriotic association. I stand with a beating heart upon your door-step. I rush past the broad-faced impassible panoply of plush and powder. The stout and wheezy old butler has not a chance of being in time to announce me; but why should he? Will not some whisper spreading in airy circles have told you plainer than the old butler can speak in his elaborate round-mouthed utterance, "He is coming—he is here!" "Here! where?" Alas! in Burgos, not in Berkeley Square. But the day will come, and is coming quickly. Two short weeks will not have worn away (I call them short weeks to persuade myself, if it were possible, that they will not drag like weary centuries,) before I can say "How do you do?" in a much pleasanter manner than I can now say "Good bye!"

LETTER XXV.

VITORIA, *May* 18.

THE Moor's fetlock was better for his two days' rest, and wet bandaging. Before starting, I made a sort of boot, or rather gaiter, for him, by folding a silk handkerchief square-wise into a broad belt, which, wrapping it round the joint, I lashed on with tape; so that now, though he often clashes his clumsy fore-legs together, he cannot cut his wound open again.

Our conversation, as we rode out of Burgos, treated of literary thefts; and how, after thinking some modern author a clever fellow for a long while on the strength of some excellent thing or two, perhaps the only bits of him which stick in your memory, you find the very same excellent things in some dark corner of Montaigne, or Rabelais, or Quevedo.

I take it the law of literary honesty is something of this sort. What is simply true and useful and solid information, you acquire indifferently from the

observation of yourself and others. For what you borrow of this kind no acknowledgment is necessary: it would be troublesome to the reader, and almost impossible to the writer, to chronicle the particular digging where he got each particular lump of Sacramental mud, which scattered grains of wisdom made it worth while to throw into his basket.

But who that wanders with his mule and pickaxe and cradle along the banks of Time's golden river, shall not remember the aspect and the name of that spot where he found some massive nugget of wit or truth, such as nature can only afford to sprinkle here and there.

Wherever we pick up, in the dusty treasuries and armouries of old, a lump of golden truth condensed in an apophthegm, or a rusty old arrow-head of ancient wit, we have no business to mint the one, or set the other in our bow without letting the world know from whose crucible and quiver they came.

I fear too many of our modern authors, "whose wit is not so perfect as their memory,"—this sarcasm Edmund Burke let fly at first, but Sheridan picked it up and sharpened the point, and ground the twin barbs into a more elaborately balanced epigram,—too

many of our modern authors live by putting a new polish upon old plate, and new shafting and feathering old arrow-heads.

Wordsworth was not ashamed to steal from so well-known an author as Pascal. Do you remember where he says—

> "And the most difficult of tasks to keep
> Heights which the soul is competent to gain"?

Pascal writes, if I remember right (and I learnt it in the youthful pride of my discovery to quote in conversation, when I thought it a clever thing to be able to understand Pascal and to depreciate Wordsworth):—

"*Ces grands efforts de l'esprit où l'âme touche quelquefois sont choses où elle ne se tient pas: Elle y saute seulement pour retomber aussitôt.*" But let us hope that it was a coincidence.

Sterne, I fear, is guilty of stealing his "Flattering Beggar," without acknowledgment from Quevedo. And he has not even the poor excuse of poverty to cover his dishonesty with rags. I have always thought Sterne the most European of our English wits; and perhaps the reason is, that he purloined largely from all the best authors of the Continent.

His "Koran" is full of the best wit and wisdom in small pieces that I remember.

H—— was of opinion that both Wordsworth and Sterne were equally thieves, having a very bad opinion especially of poets' honesty, and instancing that Pope had stolen his celebrated—

> "Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long,"

from Young. Whereupon I was surprised, and said I thought Young had come after Pope. But H—— assured me Pope was later by 70 or 80 years. He had had a discussion some years ago, and looked it up. I said I had so strong a counter-impression that I felt inclined to bet; but in the face of his having looked it up, and as I did not remember a single contemporary anecdote of Dr. Young, to fix his whereabouts in my vague chart of chronology; and as my impression was only based upon a dim recollection of a portrait before the quarto edition of his works, in which, to the best of my memory, the wig was more like the wig of Samuel Johnson than that of Samuel Butler, I should require odds, and would take three to one that the "Night Thoughts" were not published

before the "Universal Prayer." The odds could not be settled, and no business was done. I believe I should have done better to keep the wig dark.

Shortly after this H—— fell behind rather; the paces of the ponies are not very even, the Moor walking faster: and a walk with breaks of fadge is our pace. Soon before reaching Monasterio, I heard a pattering of feet, and up came the Cid without his master, without alforjas, and with the cloak, only held by one tie of the tape, trailing along the ground. I was afraid some serious accident had happened; and if I were in the same flush of literary vivacity as when I started from Seville, I might invent you an interesting story, to figure afterwards in the Voluminous. But twelve hours a day in the saddle work the fiction out of one's constitution.

Thus one sees why, among the hardy, athletic men of Lacedæmon, it was thought disgraceful to lie, because the inventive power was exceptional; while in polite and luxurious Athens, lying skilfully was considered the noblest triumph of oratory.

But to return to H——. I tried to catch the Cid, who refused to be so treated, preferring to expatiate free in a barley-field. I was on the point

of leaving him and returning along the road, when H—— appeared in the distance, *con las alforjas al cuello* (the alforjas on his shoulder), and I went to meet him. Charging both alforjas on the Moor, we walked back together; and after about a quarter of an hour H—— caught the Cid, showing great patience and subtlety, which indeed were requisite; for the Cid is a sly brute, greatly superior in intellect and experience of the world to the Moor, who, *en revanche*, is of a much nobler and more courageous nature.

We now descended into Monasterio. Here there was a respectable posada with nobody in it except the hostess, who seemed dazed and giddy, and we thought at first she was drunk, and next that she was insane. She could not be persuaded to make any effort towards our supper; and stood, with dreamy wandering eyes, leaning against the wall, while we vainly attempted to impress upon her the urgency of the occasion.

While this difficulty was still pending, and we were beginning to think we should have to make up the fire on the cold ashes of the kitchen-hearth, and forage in the place for something to cook, when the

strumming of guitars and the gingling thump of tambourines, and a sound of voices, came along the street. Soon after this musical procession had passed, the husband and two sisters of our hostess came in.

To the younger of these, who seemed a brisk little body, we addressed our petition for supper; and while she was kindling the kitchen-fire, by way of stimulus to her activity, I complimented her on her good looks.

She turned upon me rather fiercely, and said in a tragic tone, "*Yo no soy guapa*," (I am not pretty), and seemed disposed to think I was speaking ironically. And, indeed, I saw the reason why, when by the flame springing from the kindling, it was apparent that her face was marked with a slight fretwork of small-pox, illustrating the decided advantage of chiselled features over gouged.

I saw no way out of my dilemma, but by roundly affirming that I meant what I said, and would affirm to all *contradicentes* except herself, that she was *muy guapita*. And though she continued sulky for a while, she shortly began to relent, as her vanity persuaded her to surmise that I *might* have been in

earnest. By the time supper was ready the compliment had worked on her constitution, and she waited upon us and stopped to converse in a most affable manner.

She told us her sister had been very ill ever since her confinement three weeks ago, and was queer in her head, poor thing: but the baby was a beautiful baby. She admired our silver buttons and clasps, told us about the procession, which in the absorption of supper, I grieve to say I did not pay sufficient attention to, and have forgotten all about.

Next morning we rode along a pretty valley to Briviesca. The stream ran northward, and the blue mountains of the Pyrenees looked in through the opening vista. We are delighted to be getting into a mountain district again after all those horrid plains of La Mancha and Valladolid. At Briviesca there is a good inn, and a civil landlord. He took us to see the retablo of Santa Clara, a beautiful oak carving thirty feet high.

I thought I should have had a chance of selling my revolver, which would have eased our financial tightness. But when I had astonished the company with two or three barrels, and the important man

likely to buy had been drawn to witness the miracle, the other barrels (having been loaded long before, and the nipples being rusty) did not go off, and the purchaser did.

If we had got ten or twelve dollars for the pistol it would have made us independent of selling our ponies at Yrun. The ponies, both of them, were off their feed at Briviesca. About two leagues further on we stopped to let them graze in a clovery ditch by the road-side.

The lime-stone dust of the highway encourages the growth of clover. They say if you put lime on a moor it brings up this grass; and it is said that the beneficial influence of lime on peaty lands was discovered early in the seventeenth century by a Dr. Shipton, who riding about to see his patients, observed that the way-sides of the Whitby and Pickering road, which winds over bleak moorland hills, grew green with rich grasses, where nothing but heather had grown before.

Reaching Pancorvo we found the posada stable under repairs, and had to clear the manger of crumbling mortar to feed our beasts; but it appeared the slight sprinkling of lime which remained fertilised

their appetites, for this time they ate their barley.

At Pancorvo we fairly entered the mountains by a remarkable gorge. The great green hills, crested and sprinkled with hoary ragged crags, seem like huge diluvian waves solidified and changed to turf and stone.

We stopped for the night at Miranda, and soon after sunset there came on a violent thunder-storm. The rosy flashes playing among the mountain peaks, and the rolling thunder echoing down the valleys, were so pleasantly sublime that I stood well on to ten minutes beneath the pelting rain to admire it. I dare say you think it was very absurd to expose myself to the wet in such a cause; but I was sheltered beneath the ample folds of my *capa*, or I should not have been so child-(Harold)-ish.

Next day we rode into Vitoria, an uninteresting town, celebrated for tobacco and a battle. We filled our pouches with the former, but about the latter I cannot speak, for I grieve to say I never reached that volume of the "History of Europe," and this excellent work is not of dimensions amenable to form part of a travelling library on horseback.

But I suppose everybody who comes by that knows a little about history and battles, contributes his mite of explanation to the previous labyrinthine confusion which the civilian mind is afflicted with at the very mention of battle-fields.

I shall drop this in the post-office here at Vitoria. We shall not sleep here, but go on in the evening to Salinas. You see our expedition is in its dregs—weary, both man and beast, with hard travelling—H—— being in a hurry to canvass his borough, and I to lay myself at your feet.

We have thus neither time to go out of our way to find, wait for, or even invent adventures. Thus I think you will have quite opportunity to be tired of my correspondence before it comes to an end, so as not on account of its ceasing to regret my return. You shall not say of me, "in his letters indeed he is formidable, but in person contemptible;" for if I have been tedious in epistles I am prepared to be still more formidably so in person when I set my foot in Berkeley Square. Farewell.

LETTER XXVI.

VILLA FRANCA, *May* 19.

THE day, which had been very rainy, cleared up towards evening, and we rode across a plain to the north of Vitoria, which we understood to be the battle-field. When we had got across it, and were beginning to rise a little towards the hills, a small village, called Arrayabe, was the scene of a combat—not so important to the destinies of Europe perhaps—but fraught with much more lively interest to us than that which took place on the plain we were leaving behind.

I was riding about thirty yards a-head, doing all I could to keep the limping and weary Moor to a brisk walk; he drooping his head and stumbling along as if every step were to be his last. In the midst of the village we encountered the enemy, which was no other than a stout slashing cock-tail mare and her foal.

The Moor at once forgot his languishing state, pricked up his ears and arched his neck and shook his flowing mane. He sounded the powerful clarion of his nostrils, and was answered by shriller notes of defiance in return. His motive, probably no more than a polite ambition to make a gallant show as he passed the presence of this sleek mother of the stud, was sadly misconstrued by the maternal suspicions of that prudent matron.

She hastily made up her mind that the Moor's intentions were hostile towards her offspring, and turning her heels, backed towards him, launching out furiously. The Moor, losing his temper at this unkind reception of his complimentary overtures, also turned his heels and backed towards her, snorting and kicking in like manner. I, on the other hand, in great bodily fear of being smashed to atoms in the encounter, kicked and spurred with great vehemence to get him out of harm's way, and just succeeded in escaping a shower of armed hooves flashing in the immediate vicinity of my head and shoulders.

Turning round I saw that H—— and the peaceable Cid (who had never uttered an offensive remark)

were falling heirs to the catastrophe which the Moor had so nearly drawn down upon himself and his master.

I saw H—— fly off and fall entangled among the heavy drapery of his cloak in the middle of the muddy road. The Cid retreated in great terror. I was dreadfully alarmed, thinking H—— must be killed by the kick which seemed to have shot him off his saddle like a cricket-ball from a catapult. However he jumped up in a moment, and finding a great stone flung it at the mare, who, satisfied with victory, now returned to her foal.

But the mare's owner appearing in the nick of time, far from pitying H—— in his fallen and muddy plight, or congratulating him on his escape, began to use vituperative language to him for throwing stones at the mare. Hereupon H——, whose feelings had been doubtless roused by the sudden emergency, immediately replied, that if he did not hold his tongue he would throw a bigger stone at him; so, as there was nothing more to be said, he mounted the Cid again and we rode on.

It was dark before we descended to Salinas, which, as far as we could see, appeared to be situated on

one side of a deep valley, where the road begins to plunge downwards in zig-zags, from the high plateau levels of Central Spain.

We were spoken to, but not molested, by the Custom-house here on entering the Provincias Bascongadas. We found we were in Biscay, too, in another way. The Basque race is reported to be proud, honest and independent; but one never acts upon the character of hearsay till it is confirmed by experience.

Near the entrance of the town, we presented ourselves before a large house, which we had been told was the posada. The door was closed, and we called and knocked lustily. At length a maiden appeared at a wicket.

"*Caramba!* is this a way to keep gentlemen waiting in the dark? Send the mozo de la cuadra to take our beasts, *carajo!*" But the young lady, not liking our salutation, which certainly savoured more of impatience than politeness, and observing by the flaring lamp in her hand that we looked more like bandits than gentlemen, told us demurely to go about our business, and would listen to no appeal, but shut the wicket in our faces.

Thus left in outer darkness, where we were left at liberty to weep, *à discretion*, but were less likely to find materials to gnash our hungry teeth upon, H—— calmly suggested, that had our language been civiller, our reception might have been more cordial, and that we must polish up our free-and-easy Andalusian manners to suit the Provincias Bascongadas.

Turning our ponies' heads pensively down the steep street, we came to a humbler roof, where we had to put up our ponies in a sort of pig-sty cellar. Groping our way up an exceeding crooked staircase, under the conduct of a damsel of the house, we were introduced to our hostess, a tall, high-featured, stately dame, in a small kitchen completely hung with festoons of red sausages, depending there to dry for the Vitoria market to-morrow morning.

We sat among the sausages smoking and trying to make the best of our fate, and conversing with our venerable hostess, while she dressed our supper. She was a respectable motherly old lady, with a dignified gravity of manner, very different from the ordinary type of shrill, gossiping, slatternly posaderas in Spain at large. She and her daughters talked

usually in Basque to one another, though they could all speak Spanish after a fashion.

She told us that her husband had been killed in the troubles, and she herself had been in prison five years for *oponion* (*oposicion*) to Christina, although she had no political preference for one party over another, but false witnesses had been her ruin. She was now poorer than she had been in her youth, and was obliged to keep a casa de huespedes for her livelihood, which she eked out with keeping pigs. I dare say if we had not found the kitchen full of sausages, we should have found the stable full of swine.

By this time one of the daughters came up to say our room was ready, and our landlady recommended us to have supper served there. We went down and found a very decent bed-room, with clean and comfortable beds; so that after all we had had our lesson of Biscayan manners, and not suffered so much inconvenience as we might have expected.

From Salinas the road winds through fertile and populous valleys, among large green mountains, by the side of a swift and copious river. On the bank, a graven stone set forth that here a youth of

happiest promise, the only pride of now childless parents, had been drowned while fishing; from which we argued there must be fish in the stream, and indeed it looked as if good-sized trout were to be caught.

I cannot imagine a pleasanter excursion for people who like scenery and angling than to wander with a rod and sketch-book through these beautiful, well-watered valleys.

At Mondragon we baited, and I hung my cloak, damp with the rains of yesterday, from the railing of the balcony over the river, to dry in the sun. Below were a bevy of washerwomen chattering away in their language, which sounds a little like Welsh, but a nobler breadth of enunciation, and without that horrid, lisping Ll. Here I took my first lesson in the Basque language of our landlady, and this is what I learnt.

Egg-en-nóon (good day).

Gab-boón (good night).

Khat-tén (to eat).

Err-rat-tén (to drink).

On to Villa Real. Here a man treated for our ponies, but we could not do any business. We came

in sight of a very grand, massive mountain, with a peak in front something like a saddle. We learned it was called Peña del Mezqueta, which sounds like a Moorish title.

At Villa Franca, a quaint, compact, old-fashioned little town, we stopped for the night. We fed the ponies on maize, which they ate greedily. A man in the stables treated for our horses, at least disparaged them, showing a disposition to buy; but we had rather work them through to the end, for the frontier is only ten leagues further, which we hope to accomplish to-morrow.

We had come ten or eleven leagues to-day, and I was sitting on a great box before the painted façade of the posada, when some little boys gathered to see what strange brigand from the south was arrived in Villa Franca. As they were apparently discussing what manner of man I was, one of them pointed at me; whereupon I put on a very fierce expression, and touching my dagger pointed at him. He ran away, much alarmed, but shortly came and peeped round the corner; when, seeing that I laughed, he thought I could not be so terrible a man after all, and came up boldly, and took hold of my hand and

sat down by me on the box; we became great friends, and he gave me a lesson in the Basque language.

Next morning, in high spirits, we began our last day's march among the winding valleys and over the round green mountain flanks of the Pyrenees. We breakfasted at Tolosa on strawberries and cream. The people of this mountain-district seem honest, hearty, industrious folk. The dress is not unpicturesque. The blue, or scarlet *berreta* of Bayonne, a large round flat cap, very like the Kilmarnock bonnet of our northern Celts; the elastic knitted woollen vest of crimson covered with a fret of blue, and a faja, make a more graceful costume at any rate than that of the short-waisted dangle-capped men at the Catalonian end of the same range.

The cultivation of the land is peculiar: you see a row of five or six men and women, each handling a sort of forked spade composed of two broad flat prongs: with this they dig in a line, and by a simultaneous leverage, turn up a long deep sod.

Cart-wheels are of a simple construction: instead of a nave and spokes, the wheel is merely a round thick board, 3 or 4 feet in diameter. Oxen are

shod in a singular manner. The smithies have a stout frame-work of timber, where the ox is hoisted up by a broad belt under his belly, and all his legs lashed fast, in a position for the smith to work upon the hoofs at leisure. They have a very comical, if not tragical, appearance, poor beasts, when stretched upon the rack in this manner.

At Ernani we dined. About half-a-mile before entering this village, as I crossed a bridge, or rather viaduct, a walnut had stretched up its fragrant branches from below, and offered to my notice three green nuts, in excellent condition to make pickles.

I had been fasting since six in the morning (except that small plate of Alpine strawberries at Tolosa), and was desperately hungry and thirsty. In this condition of gastric craving, the idea of walnut-pickle crossed my mind as a refreshing reminiscence.

I stretched forth my hand, gathered the nuts, and ate the greater part of one of them, which I found very pungent and astringent, but of a fine aromatic flavour, acting as an agreeable stimulant to my exhausted vitals. But I had not eaten this trash above two minutes when I was seized with qualms, and began to vomit violently.

As I had but little wherewithal, I seemed in a fair way to throw up all my inwards, and remain on the roadside completely turned inside out, with an Andalusian costume lining my intestinal canal, and the mucous membrane by way of costume. Several peasant women passed by while I was retching in a terrible manner; but they said nothing and went on, with a look of suspicious horror, as if I were some plague-stricken wretch, whom it would be unsafe to help.

I lay down in a ditch (with my head pillowed on a grassy bank), but I had the good fortune not to die in it, though the occasion seemed very apposite; and feeling better after a quarter of an hour or so, rode into Ernani. H——, who was riding a hundred yards in advance at the time, had gone on, unaware of my sudden seizure; for though he was not out of sight when my indisposition seized me, I felt so faint that I could not cry out.

I was not in the least the worse, and ate a very hearty dinner at the posada, where there was a great feast going on; it being Ascension-day, and the house full of carousing people, and overflowing with good cheer of all kinds.

I discovered here that I have lost my Moorish pouch, which I should grieve for in itself, but it contained other valuables, including two sets of studs, four of my vestal virgin buttons, the drum-shaped silver seal I made at Cailly, my mermaid ring, and all my collection of coins; except my luck-money, which, as you know, I carry strung round my neck. I think I must have left it at Villa Franca, so good bye to them.

Some of them, I do not doubt, will circulate in Europe as genuine antiques, and if so I shall not so much regret the trouble they cost me in making. If they go into the crucible, I should feel sorry.

P. S.

YRUN, *May* 20.

All Spain lies behind us! We are at the end of our journey. This afternoon, as we threaded the green valleys of the Pyrenees, a flutter stirred the sultry air, and the sea-breeze met us as we trudged along, leading our weary beasts by the bridle.

As the sunset was wreathing the mountain-peaks with rose and lilac garlands, we pressed on over ridge after ridge, often disappointed, but still hoping to get a view *out* of Spain before the day should fade.

At length, at the very point of sunset, we turned the shoulder of the last hill, and the great blue ocean-plains lay below us. Eight hundred weary miles of zigzag riding had brought us from Velez, where we saw the last of the Mediterranean, and now the unquiet Bay of Biscay slept like a mill-pond between us and England.

The sunset died away into dusk as we rode down into Yrun, beyond whose river darkened away in dim perspective the undulating frontier of *La belle France.*

The poor ponies, unconscious of their destiny, and I suppose catching some touch of enthusiasm by sympathy with their masters, went in to the end of their last stage with more spirit than has been their wont of late.

Since coming in and giving them their corn, I have been to see them and dressed the Moor's fetlock. Poor beasts, we cannot tell what will become of them now. We have worked them hard; but I fear they may find still harsher taskmasters, who will feed them ill and work them till they are wretched bags of bones, with sore backs, like many of their brethren we have seen on the road.

They have been our companions and our daily care now for three or four months; we have had much trouble and many differences of opinion with them since our first struggles in the dehesa, near Seville; they are not particularly amiable or engaging in their dispositions—for the Moor is a stupid, hot-headed fool, and the Cid a cunning, sulky, cowardly beast—and yet we feel as if a close domestic tie was about to be snapped; and the unconsciousness of the poor wretches, as we hear them chumping their last feed of corn administered by our hands, makes the impending separation more melancholy.

But sell them we must, for we have no other means of raising money to get to Bayonne. I have come in with two reals and a half (about sevenpence sterling), as the total residue of the funds with which I left Madrid, so that my getting to Yrun at all may be said to have been a near-run thing.

Since Madrid we have travelled 100 leagues or about 270 miles, for the modern league is not three miles as the ancient one was. In some of the by-roads of Andalusia the nominal league was often nearer four miles than three, but on the high roads the leagues are always short.

I must shut my writing-book, for I am as tired as a dog; and it is only the flush of excitement on accomplishing our journey that has kept me up so late. I shall send this off to-morrow morning. It is impossible to say how long we shall be kept here, disposing of our ponies. But if we absolutely can find no purchaser at any price after a day or two, H—— will go on to Bayonne by diligence to change a circular note, and send me back money to pay our bill.

Meanwhile, I remain, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

YRUN, *Friday, May 21st.*

"It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer," (especially of horse-flesh,) "but when he goeth his way then he boasteth!" *

Solomon must in his time have had occasion to sell something; for he speaks more feelingly than if he had always been a buyer himself, and never experienced the wearisome disgust of waiting for reluctant customers.

I have no doubt in the days when David was king, and Solomon was a fashionable young man about Jerusalem, backing his stud and running up large bills with his tailor and jeweller, to eclipse the rival Prince Absalom in society and the sporting world, he must have seen a good deal of real life.

I wish, by the way, some writer of brilliant imagination and the Caucasian stamp of genius

* Proverbs.

would lay the scene of a novel in Jerusalem about that period.

But to return to our ponies. To-day we have been doing our endeavours to dispose of them. Our first step was, early in the morning to execute an attractive affiche. At the top of this document pranced a black and a chestnut charger. The legend ran thus :—

AQUI ESTAN PARA VENDERSE
DOS JAQUITAS ANDALUZAS,
MUY BONITAS Y MUY FUERTES.
EN SEVILLA HAN NACIDO,
DE SANGRE ARABA RANCIA.
HASTA YRUN YA HAN LEGADO
POR RONDA, GIBRALTAR, GRANADA,
MADRID, SEGOVIA, VALLADOLID,
PONIENDO DIEZ LEGUAS AL DIA.
PUES JUZGUEN VMDES. SI SON BUENAS
LAS JAQUITAS.*

APLICARSE A DON ENRIQUEZ,
Parador de Las Postas.

This notice is posted up on the stable-door, which opens on the main street of the town. Quantities of people have been looking at it, and some have been in to look at the ponies.

We have given out that we are in no hurry to sell,

* Translation :—"Here are to be sold two Andalusian ponies, very pretty and stout. They were born in Seville, of ancient Arab

and finding Yrun a pleasant place, we shall take our leisure and wait till we have an offer that suits us. It is twelve o'clock.

By-the-bye, in the anxiety about the ponies, I have never been to the post-office. I will thither at once, for who knows but I may find a letter. My hopes are not very strong, and yet I think I have a better chance after this negligent and apathetic behaviour than if I had rushed there the first moment it opened this morning.

Hip! hip!—But I won't be boisterous. I have drawn a prize from the lottery-urn. What do you think is the matter? Did I meet somebody at the stable-door, who agreed to purchase the Moor for five-and-twenty dollars? No! but I have got a letter which is worth more dollars than ever were minted in Peru. A delightful affectionate letter, reaching out arms of welcome to meet me on the banks of Bidasoa, and to console me in the vexatious delay retarding my return.

It is night. I have just come back from the sea-

race. They have already arrived as far as Yrun by Ronda, Gibraltar, Granada, Madrid, Segovia, Valladolid, doing ten leagues per day. Let your worships therefore judge whether the ponies are good. Apply to Don Enriquez, Diligence Inn."

shore, where I waited to see the sun go down upon the waters—listening to the music of the waves, which, as they now are all that lie between me and my native land, seem as they come tumbling on the beach to bring soft murmuring messages from my home; and the whispering sea-breeze too, that lightly brushes across the feathery fringes of foam. Mere fanciful nonsense is this; for the real fountain of sweet thoughts and reveries was the letter I carried there to read over and over again, till the last flush faded in the western heaven; while the murmuring waves and the whispering sea-breeze only made a pleasant accompaniment to the music of those loving words.

The evening star came out in the purpling sky like a glow-worm in a violet. By the way, I suppose violets shut up their fragrant chalices at sundown: therefore, no glowworm probably ever did appear in a violet, so let us drop the simile; and indeed I don't see that the evening star gains anything by being likened to a dirty little phosphoric worm.

But I suppose poor Venus is used to these odious comparisons by this time, for she is a favourite piece of furniture with poets and novelists—an officious set of fellows, who never can inform their readers that

something does something, without gratuitously adding that it does it in the same manner as some other thing does something else.

Be this as it may, Venus came out as Venus is in the habit of coming out of clear evenings at this time of year, and obligingly lighted me home to the Parador, where we had our tea; and H——, who has been sitting at home all day at the receipt of customers, told me he had got a bid of two-and-twenty dollars for the two beasts, which though it was an ignominiously small sum he thought it would be better to accept rather than lose time, for we have had our money's worth out of them on the road.

We went out to get our passports *visés*, so as to be ready to set off to-morrow morning by the Bayonne diligence. As we were discoursing with one of the officers of police before the door of the bureau, and advertising our ponies by telling the price they would probably have to go at if they were not rescued by some more worthy bidder, we were joined by a blustering corporal.

"He had heard of our case, *carajo!* and it was a shame to take advantage of the hurry of travellers, to get valuable animals for nothing but a mere *carajo*

of an old song. If it was his case he would do as an officer in his regiment had done at Valencia.

"This officer had a splendid horse, and when his regiment was suddenly ordered away to Tarifa, *carajo!* nobody would make him a bid for the horse, though he was worth at least three hundred dollars, *carajo!* thinking, no doubt, that by hanging back they would get him for almost a *carajo.*

"But when he was going to embark, he had the horse led down to the shore, and some thought he would take the horse aboard with him; but that was impossible, for it was a foot-regiment, and he had no permission. So when he had to go aboard himself, in the presence of those scoundrelly dealers who had come to beat him down to the lowest he would take, he said, '*Carajo!* you shall not cheat me, *carajo!* You would not give me a fair price, and, *carajo!* you shall have him for nothing—but, at the same time, I will make it a fair price, for he shall not be worth a *carajo.*' Whereupon he unclasped his navaja and cut the horse's throat, and gashed the hide all over, so that the skin should be worth nothing either, *carajo!* and I saw it done, *carajo!* and, *carajo!* I would advise you to do the same!—*carajo!!!*"

Soon after returning to our hotel the customer appeared. He is the *administrador* of the government lottery-office here, and has a bad, hellite, hang-dog cast of countenance.

He beat us down from thirty dollars, at which we had resolutely stood for some time, to twenty-five; and finally we closed the bargain at twenty-three—about five guineas. The ponies originally cost us sixteen. So that we have practically paid about five guineas and a half each for a thousand miles of locomotion—which is not very dear.

This melancholy occasion has inspired a sonnet, and such as it is it shall point the end of my letter; for I must go to bed, as I shall have to be up at six to get the portmanteaux out of the galera's office, which we could not do before, because we had no money to pay for the carriage. Indeed in our present dearth of money, the clean golden coin in which our purchaser disbursed, gave us almost as pleasant a sensation as if we had made a good bargain.

SONNET.

The Cid is sold—the Moor is mine no more.
For dollars twenty-three, the highest bid,
This night we parted with the Moor and Cid,
To Yrun's lottery *administradór*.

A thousand miles these steeds their riders bore,
By Ronda, Gib, Granada, and Madrid,
Segovia fair, and foul Valladolid,
Burgos, Vitoria, to Biscaya's shore.
Frisky and fat, round bellied as a tun,
And full of spirits, by the gate of meat,*
Each capered forth from Seville. Almost beat,
One broken-kneed—with a stiff fetlock one,
On their last legs performing their last feat,
They crossed the Pyrenees and reached Yrun.

* Puerta de la carne.

LETTER XXVIII.

BAYONNE, *May* 23.

I THOUGHT my letter from Yrun would be the last my Mabel would hear of this expedition, at least by postal intervention; and even now it is possible that I may outstrip my own letter, as it flies leisurely with folded wings of flimsy foreign paper, and be sitting in a certain drawing-room of Berkeley Square, when the red-collared postman, with a palpitating double-knock, delivers it at the door. Do you wonder why I write at all then? There are several reasons; but chiefly a stoppage of nine hours in Bayonne, and the habit, now long established, of filling up such tedious gaps of travel with epistolary overflowings, perhaps not less tedious, but which amuse me as long as I fondly figure to myself that there is one kind and sympathising spirit which does not weary over my dilated gossip. Perhaps I may learn how much my vanity has deceived me, when present at their arrival,

I see you yawn over these very lines, and sigh to observe there are a good many more.

But to make my writing a little more reasonable, you know a thousand things might happen so as to prevent our reaching England for many days. We might have a railway accident, and break a leg, or a political accident, and have to break a prison: and then, in the interim, the last scraping of news would become valuable.

Know then that on the 23d May, at half-past seven in the morning, after great struggles to get our luggage out of the galera's office, we set off in the cabriolet of the Bayonne diligence, and trundling over Bidasoa's wooden bridge, stopped on French soil to have our luggage examined.

As I was getting down, a stout and puffy little captain of artillery came bustling up to me, saying—

"Une place, Monsieur le conducteur, c'est pour une dame." I had not had time to get any European clothes out of my lately-recovered portmanteau, and as the diligence was a Spanish one, running from Vitoria to Bayonne, the artillery officer selected the most ultra-Spanish costume in the party for the probable conductor. I was in fear and trembling for

your haiks, and burnooses, and mantillas. The last I declared and had to pay ten francs upon. I also declared my Toledo blade, which the military officer on duty examined with some interest, but charged no duty for it.

Bayonne is a pleasant town, with plenty of shady trees in its walks, and places d'armes and ramparts. We reached it at about eleven; I, for my part, considerably famished, for I had only been able to get a glass of milk and a bit of bread in the hurry of starting at seven o'clock. Deposing our luggage, therefore, at the hotel and breasting a great press of importunate recommenders of rival diligence companies, from whose *empressement* we gathered that there were more means of conveyance in the market than passengers could be found to fill, we sought the Grand Café de Paris.

I, who had only a moment (between getting the portmanteaux out of the galera's office and starting by the diligence) to get a mouthful of breakfast at Yrun, was ravenously hungry, and thought of nothing but my breakfast. H——, having had more leisure before starting, began to think we were imprudent not to secure our places for the evening in the

Bordeaux diligence, before breakfast, for which he was in no hurry.

A compromise was effected, whereby he went to take places and get a circular-note cashed, and I ordered a bowl of chocolat à la crême, and brioches.

While I was breakfasting, a little boy, with a piteous face and a plaintive murmur for *petits sous*, established himself outside the window opposite me, with his nose flattened against a pane.

I went on with my brioches and chocolat à la crême, at the same time going through the ordinary pantomime of countenance, which the cold world condescends to enact for the benefit of a mendicant audience.

First a vague and apathetic stare at the window, without the remotest particularisation of the supplicant.

After a minute or two, a glance of supercilious surprise—"What! not gone yet!"

Another interstice of apathy, followed by a frown of unbenevolent impatience. An interval of plausible oblivion employed in the semblance of a collateral contemplation of the columns of Le Charivari—and

then a cold, final, lofty, determined shake of the head, intended to quash the negociation for ever.

All this I performed; but with no success. He went on unrelentingly with his "petit sous, s'il vous plait—petit sous, s'il vous plaaaaaaaaait!"

A sudden idea seized me (just as I was beginning to be ashamed of my luxurious inhumanity, and to fancy that he *might* really be hungry, and be watching my chocolate and brioches, as I dipped and ate at leisure, with a painful and gnawing envy both at his heart and stomach)—"I will make him laugh," thought I. "If he is really wretched he will not laugh, and I will give him something. If he does laugh, it will be a sort of confession of imposture, and he will be ashamed to go on begging with that piteous face."

I think I left him with his nose against the pane, and the corners of his mouth drawn down into the most dolorous expression; and myself shaking my head with a cold and forbidding denial.

Suddenly I changed my face to a mock-lugubrious parody of his own.

The surprise was too strong for him—the corners of his mouth curled up into his round dimpling

cheeks, and his head bobbed down beneath the window-sill: I could hear him trying to stifle his laughter outside.

The sudden change of my face had overcome his gravity; but the sudden change of his, though not so unexpected, overcame mine too, and I laughed more heartily than I have done for a long while.

The urchin, after a decent interval, peeped furtively in side-ways from another window, but his form of attack was changed. He could not get back his dolorous expression and plaintive murmur, he had done begging, but continued to laugh, and so did I.

Yet though he had ceased to beg in words, there was still a beseeching look in his eyes, that seemed to say,—"You have defeated and exposed me, but don't take advantage of me! It is true, I am not not very miserable and hungry as I pretended; but still I am a merry good-for-nothing dirty little varlet, whose natural and hereditary profession is beggary. Give me a petit sous, not so much out of charity as good-fellowship! Have we not laughed together? Come, I know you cannot send me away after that!"

So, out of gratitude for the amusement he had

been to me, I forwarded him a sous by the waiter, and he went away content.

There was little of the alms-giving spirit in the gift, for I could more easily have refused a more needy beggar. There was no moral principle involved; but there was a sentiment of human sympathy which gave me pleasure at the time, and which I have taken the trouble to write, thinking it may please you to read.

It is a story I could not have remembered, so as to be able to tell it, for a week. The memory preserves incident much better than sentiment.

In due time H—— came back, with a couple of *billets* for Bordeaux, in the banquette, and ten pounds'-worth of five-franc pieces, which will at least take us to Paris.

I wanted to buy some *berreta* caps, which, as they are the principal manufacture of Bayonne, of course took a good deal of hunting for, on the principle that it is always difficult to buy fish in a sea-port town, or Barcelona nuts in Barcelona.

Wandering about in search of *berretas*, we passed a foundry shop, and I saw in the window a pretty bronze crucifix which struck my fancy. We went

in to look at it. It was still crusted in places with the sand in which it had been moulded; and wishing to see the surface clean (because my own experience in casting had made me suspicious of flaws), we had a scene in the back shop, washing and brushing out the sand.

This operation gathered the workmen about us; and when the figure had been cleared and approved, I gave it to one of them to dry.

He took it upstairs for a towel, and as he brought it down, though the ladder slanted across a darkish corner, I perceived that he kissed it.

This smirched and hirsute artificer had an affectionate veneration for the image, which he perhaps himself had made—laying with no careless or irreverent hand the sandy couches of the mould. The constant multiplication of the model had not dissipated, nor the daily familiarity of labour degraded the sacred emblem in his mind.

Here was no idolatry. It stood at no altar. It was blessed by no priest. It was rough from the fashioning of his own hands. But he kissed the bit of bronze because it reminded him of his Redeemer: and I think the kiss of those grimy lips will increase

the value of the crucifix in the eyes of the young lady for whom I purchased it.

I bought a white, a blue, and a scarlet *berreta*, at the shop of a young woman, who, though I addressed her in French, would persist in talking Spanish to me. So I adopted that language for the conclusion of my bargain. She asked me whether I was a diligence-conductor, and said a great many of my countrymen bought their caps of her.

Returning about two o'clock to the Hotel and Diligence street, we discovered that we might with advantage book ourselves through to Paris by a better diligence than we had taken our places in. So we resolved to sacrifice our ten francs *arrhes* for the former places, and go by the *Inversables*.

I came home, and having four hours to spare, began this letter, which has just now been interrupted in an unforeseen manner. You must know there is a grand *concurrence*, and the diligence offices are at daggers' drawings with each other. The office we had jilted (sacrificing our arrhes, and thinking that was enough reparation) learnt that it was abandoned, and became inflamed with the bitterest

agonies of resentment against the defaulters from their slighted *banquette*.

However, they resolved to dissemble and circumvent us by stratagem. While I was writing away at my sentimental stories, a great fat porter in a very short blouse came up into the bed-room where I sat writing, and asked permission to *charger* our *malles* on his diligence.

I was of course much too far gone in the clouds of composition to perceive or imagine any distinction in porters, so I let him pant and puff away at leisure with the luggage.

It is scarcely necessary to say that this was the wrong porter. The diligence we had deserted was in league with the landlord of our hotel (the St. Etienne or Sant Esteban), and that old thief had given them notice of our intentions.

H—— coming back discovered the plot and roused me from my literary abstraction.

We flung all the oaths in the French and Spanish languages at the head of our treacherous host, and picked up the pieces to prepare a fresh volley for the Bureau des Diligences.

We said it was an illegal seizure—in fact a rob-

bery. We demanded our baggage, and took up one of our portmanteaux, as if to carry it out; not that we expected they would let us take it away, but that we might have a distinct detainer of our chattels to complain of to the authorities.

They said it was no theft—we had failed of our engagement. We said they had the arrhes. They said they would have the whole fare, and keep our goods till we paid it. We said we would go to the préfêt, but, first, we should attempt to carry out our baggage, and if they stopped us it was at their peril. We tried. There was a scuffle, in which we two strove with full a score stout men in blue buckram, and were ejected forcibly into the street.

We went to the consul, who sent a youth with us to the préfêt. The préfêt was not at home. The young man said we could get no reparation without waiting three or four days, and the best way was to pay. The triumphant Inversables came forward, and offered to go halves in our loss, which thus became a mere trifle, for the fares were exceedingly low to begin with, in consequence of the competition.

So I have returned to my letter. I have made no attempt to give you a full idea of the violent turbu-

lence of this little interlude between the acts of my epistle; but, though it was amusing, and, indeed, exciting enough, the description of a French scuffle is too commonplace to dilate upon.

Besides which I lost a full hour of my time, and now it is nearly five o'clock, when we are to dine. The diligence starts at six. So I must bid you farewell. I hope and trust this may be the last of my letters; and that no future stoppage on the way may cause me again to draw my pen, to add to the voluminous heap of epistolary lumber which, if you have not burnt them, already encumbers your archives. Farewell. A short farewell, I hope, — but still farewell.

CHAPTER IX.

The reader is now in possession of all that armful of epistles which the young lady whom the author most loves, threw down upon the so[illegible] Chapter VII.

He will naturally wish to know why they have been presented to his notice in their crude original form, instead of being worked up into the so-often-threatened "Voluminous Volumes."

To this the author has nothing to plead in extenuation of *these* volumes, which are *not* voluminous, except "circumstances over which he had no control." His companion and intended coadjutor, in that immortal work, immediately on his return placed himself on canvass for a borough, instead of on paper for a book.

The voluminous volumes were thus nipped in the

bud. But *litera scripta manet.* These bulky letters remaining, offered a sufficient pabulum of bookstuff to encourage their writer to set upon them with pen and paper and scissors, to make a volume single-handed.

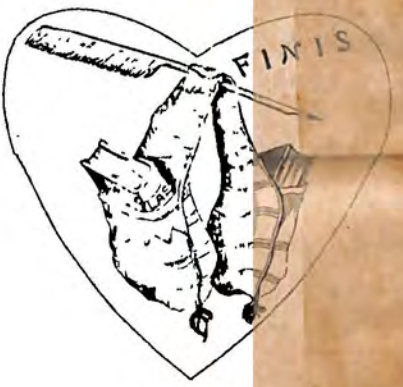
After much slashing, and dashing, and adding, and padding, and innumerable scratchings-in and scratchings-out; it was determined by grave and competent judges, that the last state of the few letters which had been so treated, was worse than the first. Therefore the original copy was preferred, and the rest of the letters were left unaltered.

Very little need here be said in their excuse; for if the reader has got to this chapter by fair means, they are in process of assimilation. In literature it is as hopeless to give a stomachic in the Postscript, as a whet in the Preface.

But at least the author may take the liberty of hoping that any person who may have hastily, and without sufficient consideration, devoured these volumes may not find them disagree.

Wish him a good conscience and a good

digestion, the two best things to make a man eat heartily, read indulgently, and pass his life in good humour, he bids the reader farewell.



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